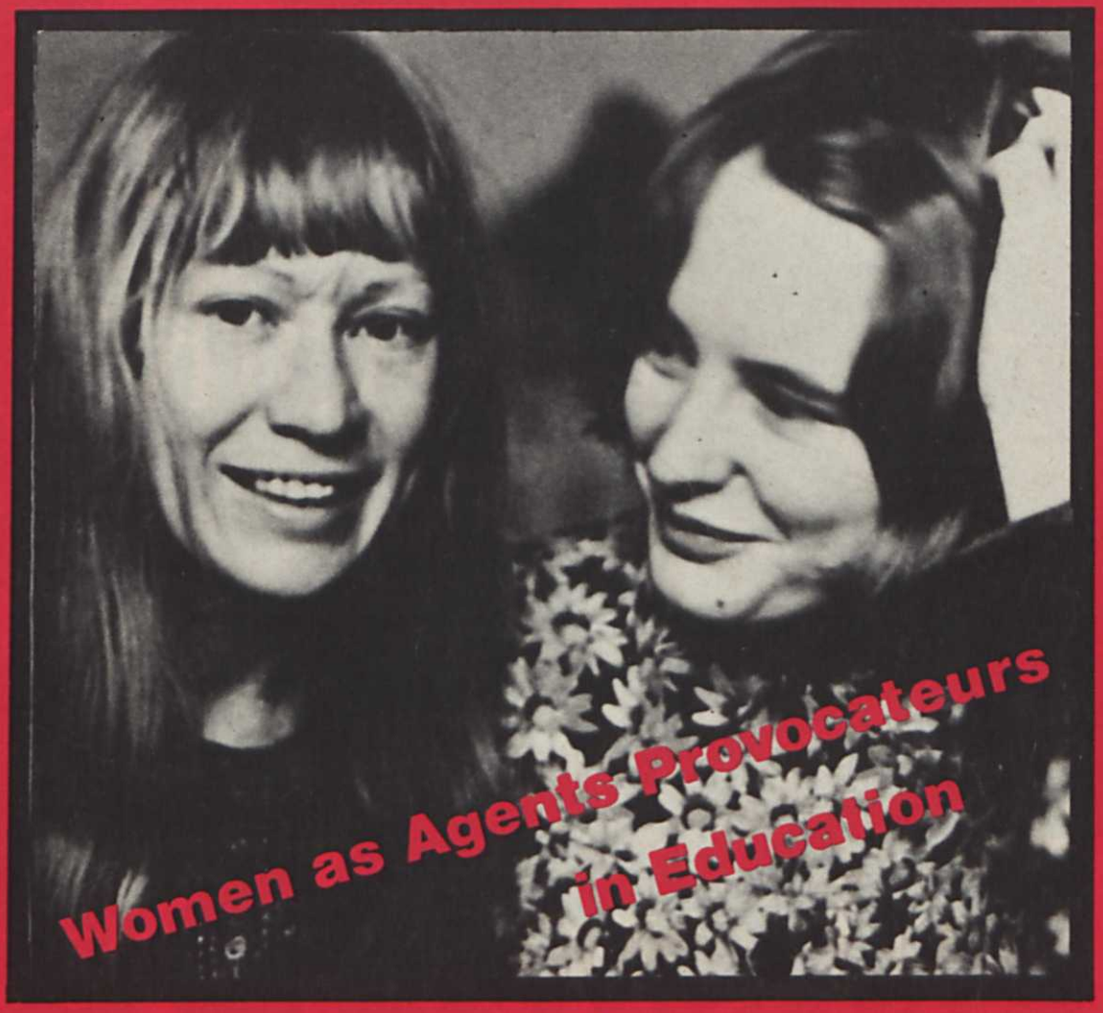
spare Rib

20p
no.20

P 523/344

RAPE— who cares?



spare parts — do it yourself framing

The first woman to trample on Women's Liberation — *where she went wrong*

astrological birth control

Don't Get Too Near the Big Chakra

— *would you walk out of this movie?*

This is

Linda Lewis

who is

remarkable



and this is
her new album

'Fathoms Deep'



on RAFT

which is

equally remarkable

*also available on cassette and cartridge

spare Rib

Cover photograph by Maryanne Holliday

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Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all unsolicited manuscripts.

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I think, of men looking down on women who don't look like their idea of what women should look like. Other women do the same thing (same reason). I can see women might not like a woman who's a challenge to their sex appeal, but this other is beyond me.

Well, I do think looks are important. I'm not being hypocritical. I don't look at a person's clothes, make-up or colour to see if I could dig a certain person. If I can try to get to know them first. Otherwise where looks are concerned, I judge by whether a person is healthy looking or not. Also, I'm attracted by so many outward appearances, I find anyone and everyone is really beautiful in some way. Even lacking in confidence, a person can shine out.

Well, that's all, I just wish more people would open their eyes and minds and not judge by society's rules.
Love and luck for the future,
Wendy Brooker,
London W.4

Defending the Coil
Dear Spare Rib,

I must reply to Suki Pryces letter in S.R. 18. She condemns the IUD because of her terrible experience with it. Does she not think that maybe it was because she had an abortion just prior to the coil being fitted, and that the uterus was not in a fit state to accept the coil? If this was the case then it is not a condemnation of the coil but of the doctor that advised her to have it fitted at this particular time.

I was fitted with the coil 5 months ago, and although I have yet to see how successful it is in stopping me from becoming pregnant, it gave me no trouble except period type pains and heavier periods for 2 months. It was also, for me, completely painless to have fitted. (Contrary to the impression given in the Spare Rib article on IUDs where you say about feeling 15 minutes of labour type pain.)

I have also been told that the coil is more easily fitted and accepted in those women who have had a child.

One always hears about the bad cases, partly because a success story isn't interesting to relate, the woman just says 'I feel fine', and partly because we see what we want to see to substantiate what we already believe. It would be a great pity if talk like Suki Pryces put some women off making a decision about contraception (the Pill also has its gory stories) – because of its unpleasant side they would rather push the whole subject out of sight.
Best Wishes
Carolle Blackwell,
Antrim. Co. N. Ireland

Out of four women in Spare Rib office who have the coil, three have had no trouble but one spent most of the summer in agony until she had her coil removed, which had also been inserted after an abortion.

Run Rabbit Run
Dear Spare Rib,

I am, for the most part, enthusiastic about your magazine, but one section, Reviews, has moved me to protest. In Issue No. 17 is a review of the Puffin 'Watership Down' by Richard Adams. The review quite rightly praises the novel, until the last sentence: 'I recommend it, but it is too male-dominated to be recommended without reservation.'

Richard Adams has based his novel on knowledge of what real rabbits do and this is a major part of the novel's success. Real-life rabbits do live a male-dominated life, as do most animals. The human animal is supposed to be intellectually superior, which is a sound reason for us not to perpetuate a male-dominated society. However, Richard Adams does not pretend to be personifying rabbits in his novel to that extent and to create more dominant ideas would have weakened the credibility of his story. As it is, the story is so strong that I sometimes felt inclined to believe the invented tales of rabbit mythology.

It is unfortunate phrases like the one quoted above which prompt those unenlightened about the Women's Movement to make scornful comments about it. Please, can we have less biased reviews and reserve the term 'male-dominated' for those novels that are degradingly so.
Yours sincerely,
Sue Wilson,
London NW11

Tender Hubby
Dear Spare Rib,

Can we have more serious stuff on woodwork – putting up shelves, double glazing, trash technology toys and some eco cookery methods – since we all remain horribly concerned with our families. What can you do with a hub, I ask, who reads Rib from cover to cover, then kisses you tenderly and says, 'I'm not like those men, am I?' and continues only to do the easy bits of washing up.
Love,
Hilary Tilney'

Sorry, Stephanie did shelves and windows in Spare Parts in Issues 1 and 3, all copies sold out.

All you need is love
Dear Spare Rib,

I think you are pursuing an admirable and worthy cause in drawing attention to and trying to change the discrimination against women which is prevalent in our society. However, I feel I must express my dismay and deep hurt at the attitude you have taken to the Bible and to the Christian religion which to many is so much more than 'a relic of the past'. In presenting your case you have taken a very prejudiced and one-sided view and have not taken in the true spirit of the word of God, just as the man who no doubt felt justified in beating his wife did not comprehend the teachings of a work which is essentially a message of love. You mention that the Bible teaches wives to be subject to their husbands, but you only give half the story because the writer goes on to say: (Living Bible translation) 'And you husbands, show the same kind of love to your wives as Christ showed to the church when he died for her . . . That is how husbands should treat their wives, loving them as part of themselves.' This message does not support those of the male species who would oppress and misuse their female counterparts, rather it cries out against them and therefore with all respect I would say, as I am sure would Deborah the prophetess and many other famous women of the Old Testament, that you have misinterpreted the divinely inspired words of a God who shudders at injustice and whose very nature is love.
Yours sincerely,
Carole Rees,
Kingston-upon-Thames,
Surrey

Who's been doffing their cap?
Dear Spare Rib,

We would like to reply to J.S. Pinner (Spare Rib No. 17) who has only belatedly appreciated the usefulness of condoms. However, we don't agree that condoms are the answer for liberated women. Perhaps her dislike of the cap stems from her own hang-ups about touching her own body. Women won't be liberated until they can get over such a phobia. There's nothing particularly difficult about putting in a cap.

Secondly, what is so 'humiliating' about putting the cap in 'early' before 'he' (that is to say, 'your old man', 'your casual affair', at any rate, the MAN) has told you that you may. Does Ms Pinner's 'humiliation' stem from her basic belief that nice girls never take the initiative. If a girl or a guy is on the pick-up they will take their cap/condom along with them. That's just common sense – if you hope to get your oats. On a more regular basis we've found that having both cap and condoms around is the best solution.
Yours,
Suzie and Anthony,
Lancaster

Who controls our bodies?
Dear Spare Rib,

This is the reply I received from Mrs Shirley Williams, the Shadow Minister of Health, in what purports to be a socialist cabinet. I wrote asking for her support in countering the aims of the anti-abortion lobby on November 20, 73. I tore it up in contempt, but have tried to stick some pieces together again. To be fair to the Labour Party, I received a friendly, encouraging reply from William Hamilton, MP.
Best wishes,
Alexandra Artley.

Since birth control is unreliable, abortion on demand is essential. We agree it's not the perfect form of contraception, but it's surely better than the birth of an unwanted child. Shirley Williams is a practising Roman Catholic. Has she ever discussed a woman's right to control her own body with women in her constituency, Hitchin?

illiams, M.P.

MMONS
1A 0AA

9th November 1973

Dear Mi

I'm afraid you've approached the wrong person. I voted against the abortion bill, and remain of the opinion that it is the worst and most backward form of birth control that could be devised.

ours sincerely,



IN OUR OWN WRITE

Hypocrisy

Dear Spare Rib,

It was with some horror that I read the article in Spare Rib 17 supporting the use of cyproterone acetate (the new castration drug) on male sexual 'criminals'. Rape, and other offences against women and girls, may be rife (indeed they are probably the most common of the largely unapprehended offences), and of course, by definition, they are committed mostly by men. But this is no justification at all for supporting invisible physical violence and chemical experiments being enacted on captive individuals in prisons and mental hospitals by male physicians – who are themselves no friends of women's liberation, or liberation in general.

Surely your writer is aware that sexual deviation is not simply the possession of 'excessive amounts of the male sexual hormone', and that 'psycho-sexual disorder' and 'hypersexuality' (as your writer puts it) are products of the general social and moral climate of sexism (for example, in advertising and the media). Any attempt to correct or control sexual aggression (including that perpetrated on young boys, incidentally) must proceed with an attack on the structure and content of advertising, and the sexist morals of the cinema and the newspapers. And then, surely, it should generalise out to a critical discussion of the arrangements in society for sexual expression, and friendship between the sexes (in schools, at work, in recreation, etc). Anything short of this, and you come to adopt a punitive attitude towards individual sex deviants, leaving the central features of a sexist culture totally unouched.

Leaving aside the important question of the unknown side-effects of cyproterone acetate and similar drugs (a question you are prepared to discuss elsewhere in the case of Ms. Briggs' experience of psychiatrists' use of Mandrax), it is frightening to think that Spare Rib, a paper that claims to be concerned with freedom, should fail to offer any human analysis of sexual crime, and that in the name of liberation it should advocate policies that identify crime and deviance in general (in this case, 'hypersexuality' in particular) as being the product of individual genetic endowment.

Yours Fraternally,
Ian Taylor,
Lecturer in Criminology,
University of Sheffield

We do not support the use of cyproterone acetate. Stephanie did a double-take when she realised the implications of her news story, since she wanted to alert readers of the drug abuse.

Immaculate Conception

Dear Spare Rib,

Further to Shirley Frost's letter on illegitimacy, yea, verily, yea. The one man at the basis of the moral system of the Western world was the biggest bastard of them all – and not only that, his father coveted another man's woman. And so too was the much sung hero, William 1066, and all those marvellous mythical mystery men at the beginnings of these mass religions.

Immaculate conception? There's no woman alive who believes in that, yet doesn't yearn for such a reality. Immaculate conception? Rape? That boy was born in a filthy hovel in the poorest section of a major city and look where he went and what his guilt-riddled friends built of his life. We all condemn that Judas man, yet not one of us would think twice about selling ourselves for a fortune.

I've cried so much that laughter is all that's left. Behind every great man is a woman, his mother, and Adam was a great man, even if he did commit incest!

Rebecca Burnett,
Hogg Hill,
Winchelsea, Sussex

Boss takes round the coffee

Dear Spare Rib,

Thanks for the encouragement and interest you have given me since you started up. In spirit, I've been Women's Lib since 1965 when I married a man and discovered to my horror his idea was 'the woman's place is in the home'. I have never recognised discrimination for what it was before and as a new graduate from London University I was horrified. Unfortunately, pregnancy made life complicated. It took several years for me to 'find myself' and my own individuality again, instead of being a 'wife' and 'mother', and playing the roles expected of me. I left my husband and life became worthwhile again.

I still get very angry about the role conditioning I see going on and its results. Also the attitudes to women which put them down and which I see in every aspect of life irritate me. I have discussions about this with the largely male staff I work with – in industry. Their attitude to me has been most interesting. I doubt whether I've made much impact, but at any rate a couple have at least been honest enough to say they find me 'odd', especially when I refused to hand round coffee at a big meeting. As I pointed out, they would not have asked a man to do it. I also said to my boss, if he would do it that time, I would do it the next. I expected the sack but was surprised to get almost an apology.

Anyway, love and best wishes,
Susan Relf,
Tonbridge Road,
Maidstone, Kent

Answering Letter to Jane

Dear Spare Rib,

I was upset at your publication of Godard and Gorin's attack on Jane Fonda. She has been so maligned by the establishment for her activities in regard to Vietnam, Indians and other oppressed groups. I would see some reason for you to publish this article if these men couldn't get printed elsewhere but I don't think this is the case.

I attended a women's conference between North American and Vietnamese 2½ years ago. It was there I learned how far people go in their worship of, and guilt trips, over the Vietnamese. I think this article reflects a very distorted way of reacting to a tragic situation.

They say that the Vietnamese needs no caption, everyone sees him or her in a photo and says to themselves 'There's a revolutionary.' This isn't true. Some Vietnamese are reactionary, some are people who are caught in a situation they don't understand, some are revolutionary. That's the way I and most people who look at a photo think if we don't read a caption. We generally connect them with the war. S.E. Asians who get in the news are generally connected with the war so this is only being realistic. When we see a photo of a white woman, of course we can't tell what she's upset about. Our society is largely made up of white people so we're not going to connect her with any particular activity. I don't see that this is any bad reflection of her.

Making a big point about whether Fonda was listening or talking seems petty. The Vietnamese have more to say about the situation. They experience it. But Fonda is connecting them and the U.S. public who are also concerned with the war. She was an ambassador of a sort for those sections of the public who wanted immediate withdrawal and condemned the U.S. Government's actions in furthering the war. I believe, in any case, that the informed person has the right to speak, in any case, that the informed person has the right to speak, and that any decay in this principle is generally held up as a degeneration of human values. The media makes stars and personalities out of mass movements. I am sure that both the Vietnamese concerned and Fonda realised this when they decided to deal with the media. They supposed good would result for their struggle even considering this disadvantage.

Toward the end of the article it is implied that Fonda is not a militant and does not struggle. For taking a stand she has had insult upon insult hurled at her. Her career has not been helped, (an actress works hard so this would be a very big sacrifice for her), at least if we accept establishment values which, as

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women struggling for respect, it is hard to dispense with entirely. I've seen her father on TV saying he rejected her for a while. This must have been a struggle for her. I think the woman has had more shit thrown at her than these men ever dream exist. I can see why she doesn't answer – it must really hurt to get it from those who pretended to be your friends.

It seems like a 1973 version of the left male trip related on page 7 of that issue. A bit more subtle but still pretty visible. I think it is significant that she was not referred to by her name – rather 'the American actress'.

I have not been a student for a long time so forgive me if I am not as lucid as I wish to be. I felt it was important for my view to be expressed to you since we are all trying to further the interests of our sex.
Love in sisterhood,
S. Freake,
London N.4.

Help
Dear Spare Rib,

Having just discovered your excellent mag, I am writing to ask you about the predicament I find myself in – and I wonder if other women find they are the same. To cut a long story short, I am married to a man who cannot take his drink – I do not think that he is an alcoholic – he changes after a few drinks from a kind loving man to a bitter, nasty and often violent man. It is the old story – I stuck it for the kids and home, and because I loved him. Now that the children are bigger I feel that if I do not get out soon I never will. However when we had our last row I consulted a solicitor who tells me that I have hardly any claim on any money (the house is rented) and my husband in his nastier moments boasts that he would see that I get nothing if I leave and he is the kind of man that would take pleasure in spiting me. My problem is – if I go I have nothing to show for over thirteen years of marriage and he gains everything that I leave – apart from what I actually own. I suppose that I fear leaving really – it is not easy if you have built up a home but at the back of my mind is the fear that I shall be stuck with this man when the children go their own way. I would not take them with me if I went now for various reasons. I don't want to sound bitter but cannot help wishing that I had made a break years ago, but the thought terrified me as much as my husband's violence. I am still young and work full time but know that my income would plummet drastically if I leave and have to keep myself – which I think is very unfair as I am the wronged one. Hope that you can make head or tail of this – maybe you or your readers have some fresh ideas as my thoughts have gone round and round and have now stopped.
Nancy Jones,
Gt. Billing
Northampton
Any readers who can help Nancy, please write to Spare Rib and we'll forward your letters.

Women's Lib Means No Meat
Dear Spare Rib,

All your earlier issues contain articles of interest to vegetarians (surely every civilized woman is one). Please do not discontinue your interest in that barbaric cycle of religions which, since Moses and the beginning of cattle gods (see Robert Graves 'The White Goddess') have treated women and animals as bad and obscene because of their obvious sensuousness (see 'The Fall', Bible).

The whole fertility mystique where nomad patriarchal herdsmen are not found is dependent on agriculture. Woman alone is one with nature, and even in the early books of the Bible under the name Ashira she ruled in Jerusalem to sow and plant.

As the bull rules the herd the cows count on him for protection and the cattle gods began. These cattle people did no planting but drifted from one pasture to another, using fields which could be sown (and incidentally feed the world).

Please reconsider.
Peace and love,
Marie Hurley,
Charkwille,
Co. Dork, Eire.

Sisterhood is Powerful
Dear Spare Rib,

It wasn't until I read your magazine that I realized what a bad deal many women get. The circumstances which others had to deal with, never affected me (being happily married, with a good home) and I was ignorant of them.

When you mention Women's Lib to most people, they constantly think of bra burners. W.L. must fight for the downtrodden and exploited; poorly paid clerical workers and secretaries; the women off sick who are the bread winners, but don't get enough supplementary benefit to support their family, divorced women; women who get the lowest possible wages for long hours and tiring, monotonous work.

There must be so much legislation going against women, that's incredible in this so-called democratic society. Anyone can see that men make the laws for themselves.
Best wishes,
J.E. Barnard (Mrs),
Luton, Beds.
Why don't you join us?

Painless Childbirth
Dear Spare Rib,

There is one aspect of Women's Liberation I feel very strongly about but have rarely heard mentioned – namely painless childbirth for every woman. I think it is barbaric in this so-called modern age of space travel and the H-bomb most women in this country have to undergo the same pain in childbirth as in the stone age. Very few hospitals or midwives offer very effective pain relievers. At the moment 'natural childbirth' is common but it is not effective for every woman.

I speak from my own experience, having had two children, one in hospital and one at home. Both my experiences were nightmares of tortuous pain. I was given two pethedine injections in my first labour of 36 hours and one pethedine injection in my second labour of 8 hours. I also had the use of the 'gas and air'. However, these did little to relieve the pain and I was told by the midwife that it was only to take the sting out of the pain. The breathing and relaxation I was taught in my ante-natal classes did not help me at all.

I was convinced that if I entered my second labour relaxed and confident and determined not *to suffer a lot of pain that I would not do so. However, I was shocked by the severe strength of pain that I went through the second time in spite of my determination that it would be so much easier.*

I feel Women's Liberation should also campaign for a better deal for women during pregnancy and childbirth, and painless childbirth should be another one of women's rights to fight for on par with abortion and contraception.

I suffered post-natal depression after the birth of my second baby and believe that the trauma of the birth was largely to blame. However, I was told by a male psychiatrist that pain in labour is psychological! That these attitudes can prevail about conditions that affect only women (menstruation pain, sickness in pregnancy, labour pains) and are regarded by many men in the medical profession as psychological in origin, shows that Women's Liberation still has a long way to go where the medical attitudes about women are concerned.

I believe that there are some hospitals in London and a few other places that offer epidurals – but it seems very unfair that painless childbirth is only available on the National Health Service depending on where you live or whether you are able to afford it privately. I also think it is disgusting that many anaesthetists (who are men and therefore do not have babies) refuse to offer this service to pregnant women.

Most women today also seem ashamed to admit that they felt pain or that they even cried out whilst in labour; but surely any person, man or woman, in a great amount of pain cannot help but make a certain amount of fuss and has no need to feel ashamed because of this. I think it is very sad that women feel they have to suffer so bravely in silence, and remain so complacent about this issue when better pain relievers are the real answer. It would be interesting also to know how much research is being done on painless childbirth.

I would like to conclude by asking women to fight for what is surely one of their most basic rights – a painfree delivery for those women who wish to have one.

How do other women feel about this issue?
Yours faithfully,
A Women's Liberation supporter.
For personal reasons I have not enclosed my name and address.

Beauty isn't only skin deep
Dear Spare Rib,

Hi. I thought you might be interested in another side of the story about oppression. I've been trying to support myself by working for others for four years or so, now. I've always been aware that there were other things to do apart from slogging 9-5 for peanuts. Getting out of this rut is hard. I keep getting myself tied to 6 month leases or flats because I haven't anywhere to live while I'm looking for what I'd really like to do. Well, everywhere I turn I'm looked down on because I dress casual and I'm not society's idea of a smart, pretty girl, or even a feminine one. Getting jobs gets harder and harder but I'm dragged into the circle of lies about experience, clothes for intertviews, doing jobs I don't want, then leaving, by which time I'm depressed by all the pretending and my mind's in such a state I can't think what to do next. I become apathetic about everything and end up getting temp jobs where I work hard but get told, 'We won't be needing you next week' because I turn up in jeans.

Well, all this doesn't do much for one's mental health and I've already experienced one time of bad depression where I couldn't even talk to anyone.

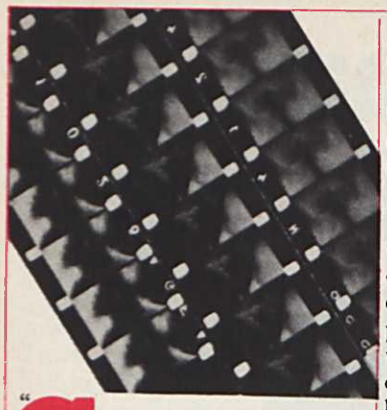
That's just the work side. You're very aware,
continued on page 6

Don't get too near the big chakra



Anne Severson is an American film maker who's been in England for a year. Here she talks about 'Near the Big Chakra' – a film of women's vaginas – which has been shown both in the States and England. Audience reaction has sometimes been violent, although Anne says no one has walked out when she's actually been present at the screening. As an antidote to 'Near the Big Chakra', she made 'Introduction to Humanities', which she screens second in the programme. This is a short film of art students, standing in front of the camera, announcing who they are. Their behaviour varies from embarrassment to brash confidence, giving the audience people to identify with, a way of laughing and releasing the emotional tension generated by the first film.

Anne says her films were attempts to understand and portray our relationship to our bodies. She's now cutting 'Animals Running' her first film to break the bonds of introspection. This summer she's also initiated women's groups combining encounter therapy with consciousness raising at Community Growth Centre in London. ▸



"Gee, I would really like to be in your cunt movie, but mine isn't quite . . .?" Over and over again women who came into the room where I was shooting expressed their anxiety about that most intimate part of their bodies. The "invisible ideal" I began to call it. Everyone thought there was such a thing as a beautiful cunt - but did they have it? No grounds for comparison. No information. Little reinforcement beyond the occasional assurances of a lover or husband.

I think I first got the idea of making the movie one day in California when my teenage daughter, lounging nude in the sun after a bath, casually exposed herself. I found myself staring at her vagina.

"Mother, for heaven's sakes!"

We both felt a little embarrassed. Later it seemed to me odd that. first, I had not looked at that part of her body since she was very small, and secondly, that my curiosity made me uncomfortable. I felt there was something wrong about my interest. I started thinking and realized that I had never seen any woman's body, that is vagina - with the exception of crotch-shots in pornographic films and magazines or close-ups in birth films. I asked my women friends if they had ever looked at other women's cunts. One or two, with bisexual experience, assured me they had, others hadn't. Few wanted to pursue the matter.

I started talking about making a film about vaginas. Men filmmaker friends listened to me with distaste. Bob Nelson was aggressively against it until he learned I intended to include black women, then he became interested, and in a burst of enthusiasm, produced the title.

His wife Diane and I were taking a yoga class together and I was intrigued that the first chakra one gains control of, or "awakens" in yogic terms, was located between the vagina and the anus. "Chakra" is Sanscrit for wheels or centres of radiating life force. Joseph Campbell calls them "centres of consciousness." There are seven or eight depending upon the system you follow. The first is located at the base of the spine and is the chakra of pure physical being, survival - it's the place where you just hang on .

The second is the centre in which zeal for life is sexually oriented, the level of consciousness where all psychological energy is erotic. I was jokingly calling it the "big chakra" because we all seemed to be stuck at this level of development. It also seemed to me that the way out of this morass was by transforming some of this energy into a piece of art. In the proposed film I wanted to focus on the same area that our energy was flowing from in the beginning yoga class. I also hoped to creatively release some of this energy for myself and other women in order to move on up the cerebrospinal ladder.

But maybe I was still anxious about this new interest. Anyway, enough people told me it was a terrible idea which I should not pursue under any circumstances that I definitely decided to do it. In the back of my mind was the undeniable realization that, at worst, it was sure to be a lucrative potboiler. The people at the Multi-Media Resource Center, then a branch of Glide Methodist Church in San Francisco, agreed to produce and distribute the film and to help me find women willing to be photographed.

I designed a flyer with a red rose in the centre, a good symbol for the vagina - spiritual unfolding, femininity, fecundity - inviting women to be in a film about "women's parts." This phrase seemed evasive but I was still a little uneasy.

On the first day of shooting I was even more uneasy. It seemed likely that none would show up. Then in walked one of my oldest friends, unmarried and three months pregnant. She explained she was early because she was lunching with her parents, up from Los Angeles for a visit, and she didn't want to tell them she was showing her "pee pee hole" in Anne's movie. With enormous relief I got to the business of shooting.

A steady stream of women followed her. Most were friends or students and former-students of mine from the San Francisco Art Institute where I was filming. A few were strangers who had seen the flyer or heard my announcement at a Multi-Media sex education class. By the time the mother of my friend who had been the first to appear walked in, I was feeling quite confident.

"What's the matter, isn't my vagina good enough for your film?" she said. I was so grateful to her for coming that I almost wept. She was solid middle-class and completely respectable. If she wanted to be in the film, there was nothing for me to worry about.

The atmosphere of the room where I was working was actually very pleasant. Several women told me later that they had come that day to see what was happening, thinking they would decide whether or not to be in the film on the basis of the feeling they had. I had arranged to have a woman from a class of mine whom I felt had unusually calm and supportive vibes to be there to explain to each arrival exactly what was expected. It worked very well. Women came in nervously, talked to her, then to other women who had already been filmed, and decided to sign up.

Everyone wrote down name, address, and birth date. I wanted to know the age range of the women participating and I was also interested in assertaining if there was a particular astrological spread. At the most banal level of astrological prediction one would expect a high percentage of women with sun in aurus or Scorpio to appear in a cunt film. Taurus is ruled by the planet Venus, love and beauty. Being an earth sign it is typically sensual, physical, earthy. Scorpio is ruled by Mars, the planet of desire and dynamic energy. It is the sex sign of the zodiac and rules the generative system. As expected, over half of the women in the film had suns in these two signs. Each other sign was represented. The only Gemini was a baby brought in by her Taurus mother.

I noticed a few other amusing astrological relationships. A Leo woman - proud, self-confident, - came in with her fiance who, before she was filmed, took out his pocket comb and carefully combed her pubic hair. A triple Libra, that is, a woman with both sun and moon in Libra plus Libra rising, she had already been in a number of independent films because of her unusual good looks. She was one of the few women who revealed no anxiety about the beauty of her vagina. She was also the only woman who did not wear underpants, which I interpreted as another mark of self-confidence.

A Scorpio woman came in late the first evening with her husband. She had been attending a sex education class which included physical training to develop the muscles of the vaginal barrel and they were both very pleased with the results. She volunteered to demonstrate the movements she had learned for the film. They were remarkable. After filming her I began asking each woman to move and discovered a whole range of personal variations on the basic levator ani contraction.

There were four Virgos involved: myself, a prostitute, a lesbian, and a psychologist who arrived too late, after I had dismantled the equipment. I find this combination difficult to briefly explain. Suffice it to say that we all deviate from the sexual-social norm in some way. The prostitute, in addition to her choice of profession, is distinguished by having had considerable body work done. She had a nose and chin job some years ago, which she now regrets, later had silicone injections in her breasts, and finally had her vagina surgically altered. The clitoral hood was removed to intensify sensation and the outer labia were trimmed to give the vagina a more youthful appearance and to allow deeper penetration. She feels that the vaginal surgery was a good idea and explained to me that it was necessary for her work. I am tempted to go on writing about her since she has been a kind of female guru for me and a lot of other women and men for some years, but I'll just recount one anecdote.

We first met when I was teaching a women's class at the Art Institute in the early days of the movement. It was a touchy situation. I had been maligned by the other faculty in my department, all male, for raising an issue that had no relevance, to art. On the other hand, my class had been raided by a group of women radicals from Berkeley because it was co-ed and I had a male teaching assistant. I later discovered that it was one of my hostile colleagues who had turned us in.



The "hooker," a word she used, had not appeared the week we expected her but we had an exciting session anyway, each of

us in the class taking a turn at pretending to be her while the others asked questions. When she arrived the next week I was afraid that we might embarrass or upset her because the questions we had worked up were very personal and direct. When I explained that I hoped we wouldn't offend her she grinned at me and shoved back her wide-brimmed hat.

"Look," she said, "you can't insult a whore."



I had just finished writing the preceding paragraph when I opened Robert Graves' *The White Goddess* and read the following:

The baleful moon-dew used by the witches of Thessaly was apparently a girl's first menstrual blood, taken during an eclipse of the moon. Pliny devotes a whole chapter of his *Natural History* to the subject and gives a long list of the powers for good and bad that a menstruating woman possesses. Her touch can blast vines, ivy, and rue, fade purple cloth, blacken linen in the wash-tub, tarnish copper, make bees desert their hives, and cause abortion in mares; but she can also rid a field of pests by walking around it naked before sunrise, calm a storm at sea by exposing her genitals, and cure boils, ervsipelas, hydrophobia, and barrenness.

The whole cosmos tipped and I saw how a position at the bottom becomes the ultimate strength. During the class meeting she talked about how prostitution cracked and destroyed the egos of a lot of hookers. She also pointed out, and was intensely alive evidence for, the enormous power that comes from doing it the hard way, acting on your impulses, taking the consequences. If you choose to be at the bottom, or find yourself there, ain't nobody can shove you down. I might point out that she has Venus in Leo in the twelfth house: her love nature in the sign of generosity and expansion, in the house of karma and bondage, of salvation and secret undoing. I, finally, have Jupiter in Aries in the eleventh house, an indication of unusual heroes, heroines.

So all together thirty-eight women appeared for the film. The age range was from three months to sixty-three years. There were two black women, one half-Oriental girl, two lesbians, one prostitute, two virgins (I think), a lot of mothers, three mother's-to-be, three grand-mothers, four women menstruating, and one girl who discovered a week later that she had gonorrhea, and one woman who learned a month later that she had uterine cancer. All relevant, I believe, because none of these characteristics is evident in the film - except the women who are menstruating - you can see their tampax strings.

In fact, when the first woman having her period came in to be filmed and casually mentioned that she hoped I didn't mind, I felt mildly shocked. One more anxiety registered. I realized that I would never consider being in such a film during my period - an old hangover from the 50's when the fact of one's period was to be concealed or disguised. Teenage kotex terrors. What if someone could *see* the outline! I can remember my grandmother on the day after the big event occurred for the first time:

"Your Mother told me about it, dear, I'm so sorry." How angry I felt. It was bad enough to have to walk around with a soggy mattress between your legs on the hottest summer day, but why that vile women's burden attitude?

Anyway, these women didn't seem to suffer from any fears about menstruation being dirty or a source of shame. They climbed up on the table and spread them out, exposing the vagina, menstrual period, tampax string and all. One last shudder when I realized that even during times of casual nudity with my most intimate friends I would carefully tuck the little string into the vaginal opening so it wouldn't be visible.

Too bad all that mythic power can't cure the one common female condition that is so vividly evident in the film. The ubiquitous yeast infection. Ick. An unattractive, smelly, recurrent nuisance. Showing the film around to women's groups - in England, in the States, in Europe - I have gleaned the following information, some of which is no doubt unreliable. The infection in its various forms seems closely linked with use of birth control pills. Women have told me it has appeared less frequently when they switched from nylon to cotton underpants. One woman said no underpants helped considerably. There has been general agreement that the usual medical treatment is ineffective. Two home remedies I was told about seem worth considering. The first was a douche of tea made from slippery elm back. I remember that a friend who had grown up in rural Oklahoma told me her local midwife always used a branch of slipper elm when performing abortions. In any case, several women told me this tea douche, lukewarm I trust, would clear up the condition in two days. Another technique developed by a lab technician in California was the insertion of live acidopholis, yogurt. She said the problem was getting the yogurt into the vagina and that she found it worked to put the yogurt in her motuh, force it into an empty tampax tube, and insert as if it were a tampax.

Finally, another woman said she prevented both yeast infections and urinary tract infections by inserting a vitamin E capsule before fucking. I believe she punctured the capsule with a pin first. She added that the action of fucking spread the vitamins around and that the treatment was also beneficial to the skin of the penis.

One final anecdote. Another woman told me that if she fucked her boyfriend and he had been fucking someone else she knew because she would get a severe yeast infection immediately afterwards. Possibly an unusually disagreeable form of paranoia.

I finished editing the film and started showing it. One of the first screenings was for the women who were in it and their guests. Few were able to recognize themselves except for one friend who has bright red pubic hair and the prostitute. She was accompanied by a happy crowd of intimates who whistled and plauded when her cunt appeared on the screen.



Another male filmmaker, Scott Bartlett, was dissatisfied with the editing and volunteered to do another cut for me. I gave him the color workprint and waited expectantly to see what he would do. Not surprisingly, Scott eliminated all of the sexually irrelevant or, perhaps I should say, sexually distracting details. He edited out all cunts with tampax strings, all of those with yeast infections. Each shot was shortened. The result is a lot hotter. Short fast shots of beautiful cunts in glowing technicolor. I just looked at it in my viewer to check these impressions. Objectively, I might even say that he made a better film of the footage. His film is erotic, exciting, sexual. My version is gruelling, even tedious, and as far as I know, no man has ever gotten an erection watching it. but subjectively, I am satisfied by my film and not interested in his.

A lot of people have seen the film and gotten angry. Crowds were annoyed at the 1972 Edinburgh Festival, and in a magazine review someone showed me the cunts were compared to "rashers of bacon."

When it was shown at the Ann Arbor Film Festival several hundred walked out. One woman was outraged by this response, especially since some of those leaving were making rude and irreverent comments. She chased them up the aisles, bashing with her bag. Later, she explained to me, "I would kill for your film."

Another woman walked up to me after a screening in England, and with a very sweet smile, told me she was furious. When I asked why, she explained that her husband had been sitting next to her! I was still perplexed. We took a long walk together. I explained the genesis of my idea and my motivations as well as I could. She explained that she feared that her husband, having been exposed to the horror of the female genitals in such an unequivocal fashion, would never desire her again. We parted sympathetically. I didn't particularly want *Chakra* to turn men on, but it would seem too bad if an unhurried non-sexual view of the human vagina turned them off.

The most candid response was that of an official of the American Embassy in London where I did a small private screening. We were relaxed after a fine dinner with wine and drinks, and more drinks. He would grin effusively at me and slap my back, "You had the balls to do that! . . . the balls to do that!"

Not at all, I thought, not at all.

Anne would like to show the film to groups for discussion. If you're interested, write to Anne Severson, c/o Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS.

For information about the therapy groups, write to Community, 6 Harley Road, London NW3.

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Next month Angela is taking a clinical look at the activities of self-help groups, self examination and interception.

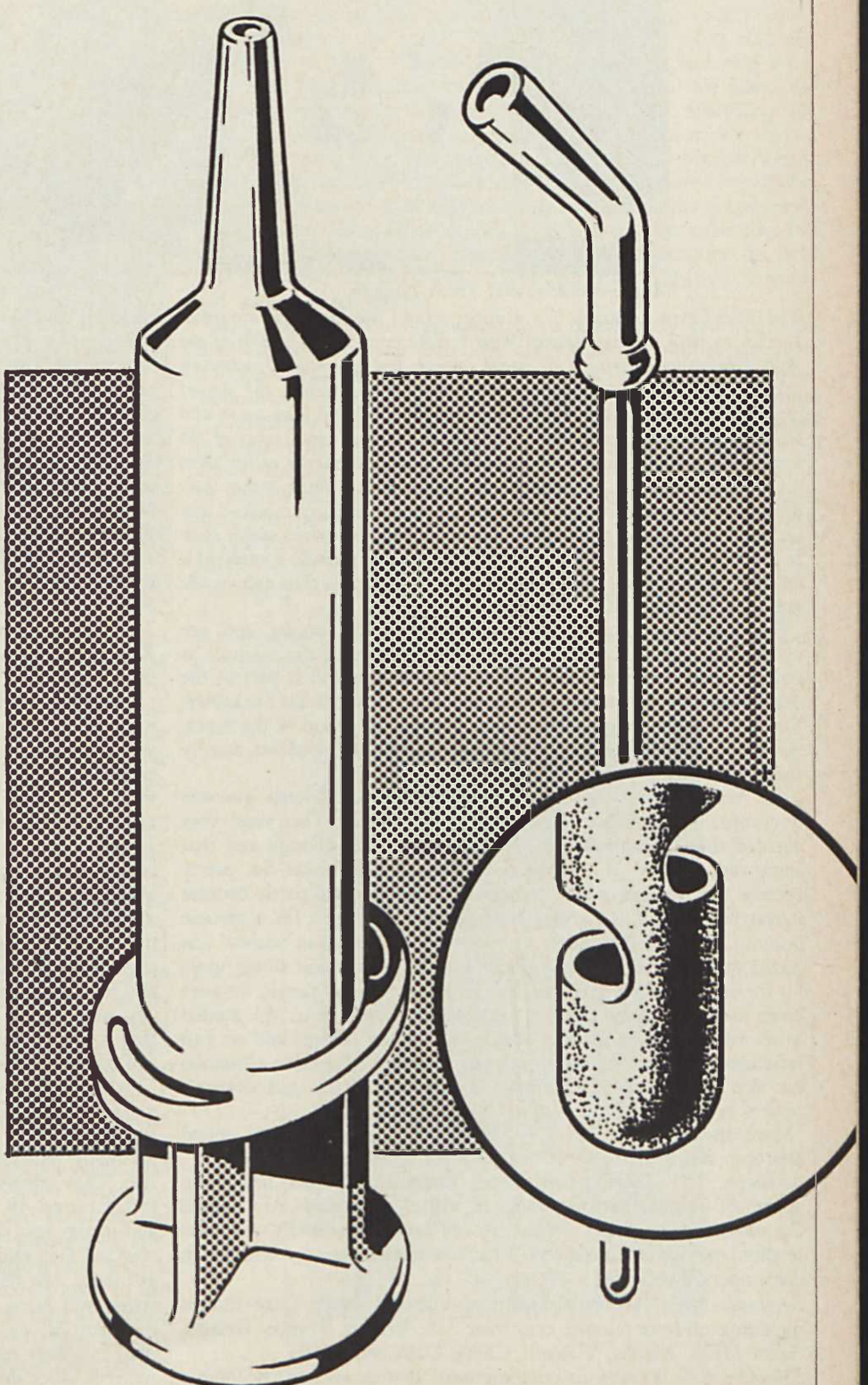


illustration: [redacted] *de Silva*

FEMINIST SUBVERSION



Margaret Edney ***describes how she and*** **Tricia Langton** ***had to become agents provocateurs in a sense when they taught a class on 'Women in Society' last summer. Classes like this are useful ways of connecting women's liberation with women outside the movement, but the informal structure necessary for consciousness raising often exposes a threatened reaction.***

Maryanne Holliday

Margaret Edney and Tricia Langton

The John Clark Academy is a summer school for American students. It tries to be a summer school with a difference ... *'The aim of the JCA Educational centre is to create courses and educational materials which allow the participants to discover for themselves the use of conceptualization, for the understanding of the situations they are in and the phenomena they encounter. The idea is to show conceptions of the world which liberate and add to perception and experience rather than constrain and stultify. Participants are taught how to think rather than what to think; and they are encouraged to become actively involved and utilise a wide range of their talents and skills and perceptions rather than to be passive recipients. For this reason every course includes considerable use of the field seminar which is designed to provoke and then analyse the nature of response.'* (JCA Prospectus)

The scheduled courses are approximately five weeks and are residential. University accommodation throughout the country is utilised since a comprehensive tourist trip of England is part of the deal, although the major part of the time is spent in Yorkshire. Courses in archaeology, architecture, cinema, the mood of the times, the novel, culture and society, etc are offered and students usually sign on for two or more.

The Academy was started some years ago by some friends who saw it eventually funding a large community project. This year, they decided that liberating experiences weren't quite enough and that some radical content was needed to season the brew. So, partly because they wanted to give some jobs to the girls and partly because it was fashionable and partly because they supported (in a myopic fashion) Women's Liberation, a course called 'Women in Society' was added to the syllabus. Tricia Langton and I were asked to be tutors for the course and we accepted, knowing that to some extent, we were being used but hoping that we might also do some using. We wanted to see what could be done in such a short space of time and we had lofty ideas of preparing an all-purpose Women's Liberation education kit. We also entertained fantasies of self-help clinics and women's centres being part of the eventual community project.

Since the JCA needed a prospectus of the course, our initial approach was formal and we set out a list of seminars as follows:

Seminars 1,2. Introduction. The fundamental questions, who oppresses women? In what ways are women oppressed? Are women the most fundamentally oppressed and hence potentially the most revolutionary group in society? What is women's concrete situation in contemporary society?

Seminars 3,4,5. Historical and cross-cultural study. Case studies including underdeveloped countries: US, Britain, France, Ireland, South Africa, Algeria, Vietnam, China, Cuba and Russia.

Seminars 6,7. Women in contemporary British society. Economic position, ideological position and political roles.

Seminars 8,9. Physiology and Psychology. The female stereotype and its validity. The wife-mother syndrome. The spinster. The lesbian. Alternative roles.

Seminar 10. Women and commercial exploitation. Advertising, tv, and films.

Seminar 11. Woman in control of her own body. Abortion. Contraception. Sterilisation.

Seminar 12. The women's movement in Britain and the future. Plus suggested background reading: Women's Estate by Juliet Mitchell, The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir, Sisterhood is Powerful, The Body Politic, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State by F. Engles, The Dialectics of Sex by Shulamith Firestone, The Female Eunuch by Germaine Greer, Women, Resistance and Revolution by Sheila Rowbotham and Women and the Subversion of the Community by Maria Rosa Dalla Costa.

A couple of weeks before the start of the summer school, a planning weekend was arranged and we met some more new members of staff who had been brought in to tutor courses in English education (with emphasis on the open classroom). There were five men and one woman, all much older than us. They were education specialists and had a different conception of, the approach to, learning since they had all spent years as teachers, headmasters, etc. The Women in Society course was a puzzle to them and they were apprehensive about assigning a role to Tricia and me. They alternated between patronising us and totally ignoring us. At one meeting where the idea of the students meeting immigrant workers (male) as part of their environmental studies was mooted, we pointed out that there were also female immigrants with even more difficult problems. 'Of course, yes, we'll have a woman as well, yes of course, what a good idea - how could we have forgotten it.' For them, our casual style of dress and our independent behaviour were "such a pity in such nice girls". Chivalry and protection were their main methods of approach. They rushed to open doors, pay for drinks and leapt to their feet when we entered a room. However when it came to deciding what to do, arranging schedules or discussing projects, all consideration for us fled. They tried to control and dominate. Lip service only was paid to our course. In one breath they would be saying "how interesting" and in the next calling a girl a nymphomaniac. When the word was objected they said testily "Oh well, replace it with sexually liberated girl then." We felt we had to assert ourselves since neither us nor the course was being taken seriously. We were fripperies - the icing on the cake. So we became difficult and aggressive to counteract this image, which resulted in us being laughed at as the "women's libbers", since their desire to categorise us, pigeon-hole us (and then

forget us) was so strong. This strengthened our desire to confront and upset their bureaucratic attitudes; we had become stereotypes and had lost our identity. So we rebelled - we went for a walk in the garden instead of going to meetings - we ordered the wildest, most expensive things on the menu - we laughed at them openly - we were generally subversive. 'You have certainly made it clear that you are women', we were told, at the end of the weekend.



Their over-authoritarianism and their refusal to break down the pupil-teacher relationship provoked us into altering our conception of the course. Total informality was our theme and we now felt it important to relate to all the women in the school, not just those assigned to 'Women in Society'. We would try to make our presence felt at all times and to relate what we were trying to say to all the courses, to weave a contrapuntal, if subversive, theme. After all, this should complement the open education philosophy of the school.

The first seminar was at Oxford. There were over 60 students, mostly women, with an age-range of 16- 80 and with very different aims and expectations. Twelve had signed on for the Women in Society course. In the first seminar we discussed endlessly what we thought our approach would be. Firstly, to try and get rid of the desk and chairs, the hierarchical lecture set up and replace it with a more relaxed grouping. Then to explain that we thought a fairly informal structure would be more appropriate for the course since it would give us space to get to know each other's consciousness. Formal lectures were already assigned, and we would be available at all times for discussion and as potential resource material. We wanted the main emphasis to be on a conscious analysis of one's own direct experience.

It would be patently absurd for two women to sit and lecture another group of women about their role in society. Every waking minute of their lives they experienced the slights, insults, hurts, oppressions (and occasional delights) of being women. By talking together, raising the surface discontents and reactions to each other, and exploring our common experience we could work towards a re-discovery of ourselves. The pupil-teacher relationship would dissolve and with it hopefully the inertia of the passive student who merely takes in and does not give out. They might begin to question what they were doing and what was happening. For example, why were the students mostly women and the teachers mostly men at the Academy? How did the men relate as teachers to the women? What kind of attitudes did they display? What kind of relationship or dynamic was set up? Clearly, this was a bit difficult for the women to adjust to immediately, so for the rest of the seminar, I talked . . . about the lack of female identity, in the sense that it is imposed from outside, about the contradictory images put out by the media - pretty, silly, sexy, childish, inefficient, but also perfect mother; about the family, its relationship to the state and its maintenance of patriarchy. Gradually the women joined in the discussion and the seminar extended as argument raged. 'But I like men opening doors for me', wailed one woman. 'Well, for every door I've had opened, there've been ten slammed in my face', retorted another. We had started.

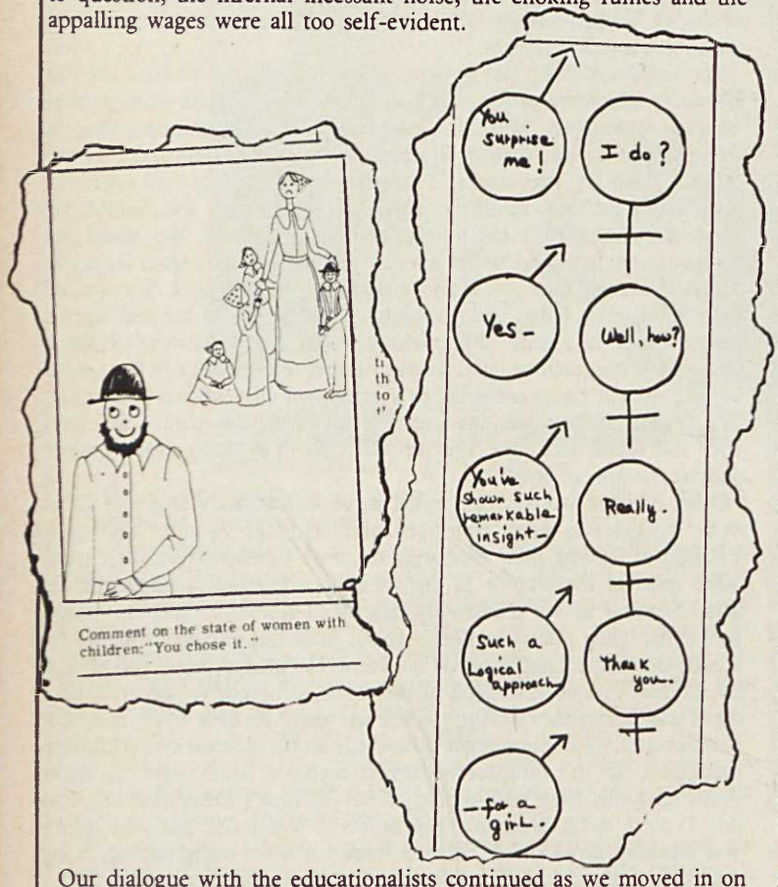
Reasons for coming to the summer school seemed to be varied. They were all teachers or training to be teachers, so it was possible to pick up some graduate credits (which mean salary increments). Some had come for a good time or to pick up an English husband/lover, others to absorb English culture or try a new experience and still others who took the courses seriously.

Jean Gardener came and gave an invited lecture on Women and the Economy which seemed to shock and horrify a lot of the students who were comparatively well off. The school then de-camped, first to York University and then to Bradford University. Tricia and I moved in with them for two weeks. The students had a very full schedule, apart from lectures, seminars, education workshops and field trips, there were numerous excursions and social events. We asked the women to try and meet us for a small period each day, apart from our assigned seminars, to assess and analyse our experiences. We wanted them to observe, listen and question, all the time - to become 'agents provocateurs' in a sense. Meanwhile, we tried to be always available and always prepared to talk. We kept sherry and biscuits in our rooms so that women could come in for a drink and chat whenever they felt like it. We drove buses, we participated in all the excursions, field trips and social occasions, and we took part in as many other seminrs and workshops as possible.

Older married women responded to us immediately and told us of their struggles to keep their jobs and bring up families and their triumph at leaving their husbands to come to Europe on their own. With most of the women of our own age there was a more gradual identification as we tentatively discussed sexuality and emotional problems. They talked endlessly about their oppression in school by a male-dominated staff control structure. No interest at all was shown by the few women dedicated to the sexual competitive stakes, in fact there was sometimes hostility since we were, in their eyes, potential competitors. We used meal times for extra discussion, although hampered by the familiar breakfast scene of some man or other drawing up his chair and saying, 'What Women's Liberation *ought* to do. . .' or 'I think Women's Liberation is wonderful but why aren't you thinking about men?'. After a week I made a badge saying, 'I eat men for breakfast.' 'Tsk, tsk, how aggressive', they replied.



Within the university we asked the women to talk to the cooks, the cleaners, and the bed-makers and to watch how they were treated by the men. Also to scrutinise the running of the JCA itself, to notice over-loaded secretaries being asked to dial telephone numbers for men who were idly tapping their own big, strong fingers. On field trips to villages and towns we asked them to try and establish female profiles. Where were the women, what were they doing and what was their relation to the community? The other tutors had asked them to pick up bits of brick and leaves, to do charcoal rubbings of manhole covers and to photograph ducks. We suggested they find out the population, sex, age, class ratios, the recreation facilities, available transport, shops, prices, nurseries, schools, ranges of goods and work prospects. School visits could be used to answer who plays with who, who sits next to who, who teaches who and what is being taught. By the time we visited a Bradford Wool Mill, there was no need to indicate what to question, the infernal incessant noise, the choking fumes and the appalling wages were all too self-evident.



Our dialogue with the educationalists continued as we moved in on their craft workshops. The general idea was that you used any medium to explore some aspects of the field trips. This was not actually our scheduled province we were supposed to be using the time to prepare our own seminars. By participating as students with the students we hoped to demystify the idea of us being teachers. Having collected all the local newspapers, we cut out everything we could find about women and made wall newspapers around the themes, work, leisure and home, which tried to point out some of the contradictions (like the part-time jobs offered which were, in fact, a six-hour day). We also made comic strips, diagrams of Bradford facts and figures and a giant cartoon. Surreptitiously, women left their own education project work to help us and when it was finished we covered the foyer of the main dining-room with our efforts. 'Well, you certainly work hard, whatever else...' was the male tutor's comment. Later on some of the displays were ripped down although no-one would say why.

The film course also provided a forum for discussion. The tutor interpreted the films we watched in terms of Jungian archetypes (man seeking salvation fleeing from devouring mother). This was rejected quite violently by a lot of the women who saw it as women fighting desperately to get out of oppressive material circumstances but ultimately being crushed and destroyed. After much pressure "The Salt of the Earth" was shown. It's about a strike in New Mexico which only succeeds when women join the struggle. Cheers, clapping and stamps of applause went on throughout the film and afterwards the women supported it vehemently against attacks by male students and tutors.

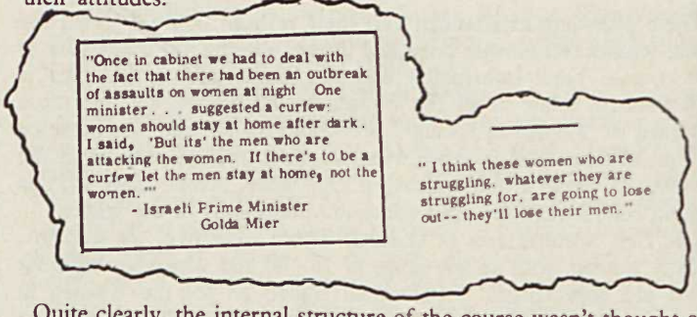
In social situations we made a point of dancing together, of buying drinks, of commandeering buses and cars, of leaving field trips early so that we could go out for tea and buns or of skipping workshops to go shopping instead. This was to show that women could enjoy themselves together and not be dependant on men in social situations. At Batley Variety Club where we were taken en masse for a night out, we had to sit through a cabaret full of sexist and racist jokes. As a reaction we took over the small dance floor and had a wonderful time - sixty slightly drunk and very happy women really bopping and enjoying each other's company.

When the school moved to London we asked Sheila Rowbotham to talk on the history of the Women's Liberation Movement but to relate it to her own history and to her move from Yorkshire to the South and the differences and problems she encountered. Most of the women said they felt a lot of identification with what Sheila said. They had experienced the cultural and environmental differences between the North and the South but more immediate was their understanding of Sheila's description of awakening sexuality, attitudes to men, and confusion over what society wanted her to be and what she felt she was.

The school was nearly at an end and there was a week-end in which to accomplish whatever project work the tutors required. We suggested a collective attempt at a newspaper which we could print and hand out at the leaving party. It was tackled with great enthusiasm once we had shown them how to lay out etc. and its distribution created quite a stir at the party - 'wonderful' said the women, 'not as hasty as we thought it might be', said the men.

Was it worth the total exhaustion and shattered nerves we now felt? What had we learned? What had the students learned? Well, there was plenty of response, not just from the women who had signed up for the course but from women throughout the school who felt free to join our seminars and meetings whenever they could. Similarly there was a great deal of social response from everyone and a genuine delight in all female subversive activities. Discussions were intense and when personal histories were revealed a great deal of warmth and solidarity were generated. One student said it had changed her whole outlook on life, others were excited at having discovered collective activity and were making plans to produce their own newspaper in the States and yet others were totally unmoved.

The book list has been a mistake since no one looked at it nor did they use the magazine and pamphlet stall that we maintained. This could have been a reflection of cultural differences which we hadn't really thought out beforehand such as, quite an advanced type of bourgeois-feminist consciousness going hand-in-hand with reactionary social attitudes. A world-view was lacking in their approach to life. Women's Liberation had meant to them wild, bra-burning shriekers. They were more at home with N.O.W. (National Organisation of Women) which is a liberal civil rights type movement. Our relative gentleness surprised them and made them reconsider their attitudes.



Quite clearly, the internal structure of the course wasn't thought out well enough, although fortunately we were able to learn as we went along and adapt our approach. Women can't just suddenly open up and think creatively or raise their consciousness if they've been educated and trained to keep their minds closed. The balance between formal lecturing and informal discussion has to be carefully worked out. Our fundamental mistake was not to realize that our informal structure had to work within a rigidly formal structure. Our casual attitudes were interpreted as meaning that we were not to be taken seriously. As tutors we were given the worst times in a crowded time-table, the times that nobody else wanted, the times when the students were exhausted. We were given least resources and least consideration. The decision that Tricia and I took to share the course, although it meant sharing the salary, proved to be correct. From the outset, we had insisted that it be a joint venture but the school understood this to be doing half each - in terms of time. We had to fight to be allowed to work together and throughout the course it was vitally important in terms of our solidarity and sanity. We are still receiving letters from some of the women and that in itself makes it worthwhile but I won't forget the huge bunches of flowers they gave us when they left. We both wept.

Spin-off or Rip-off?

There is no such thing as an innocent design. In the drive to sell, design is used to convince consumers that products are continually new and improved. All too often innovation is only skin deep because designers ignore the functional aspect of design and concentrate on hidden persuaders – certain seductive overtones and associations to lure buyers.* Kathy Jones *has been looking at the ingredients which designers have been stirring into kitchens.

The image of a clean, shining streamlined kitchen, just like the inside of a spaceship, has been steadily evolving over the last ten years. It was the time when man's aspirations were turning towards the stars; the first rockets were being launched. The media whipped up excitement; and space age ideals were reflected in new products to make the housewife feel she is participating in society's greatest technological advancements. We are offered shining surfaces. Everything must be push button controlled, we can light the latest gas ovens by turning on the gas and pressing the ignition button – even the names which are now used reinforce the image of living in a space capsule. We are at the hub of it all. We have the control console in front of us. We are scientists, we are technicians. We are in touch with the most progressive development man has known. The use of these concepts would be all very well if it didn't mean that the image was deceptive, and that there weren't so many drawbacks. But there are.

For one thing, it's all much more expensive than it needs to be. Machines and gadgets are made to appear much more complicated (and therefore more efficient) than they ▶





The boy puts on an astronauts suit while the mother and daughter have to make do with their space age cooker, equipped with ergonomically designed eye level controls in space age colours – gleaming white and stainless steel.



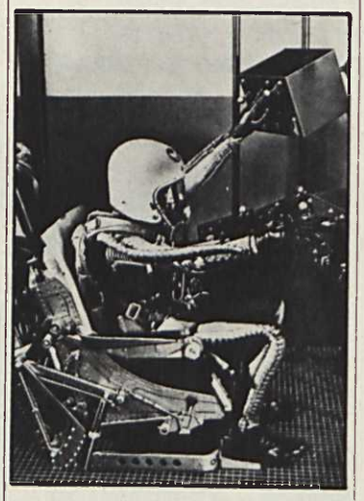
Outer space invades the kitchen; the sideboard curves to form a console, the cooker becomes a control panel, and cooks are conned into believing that they have the wonders of science at their finger tips – that standing at the stove they are in touch with society's latest technological advances. The house becomes Houston, and every meal a Mission.

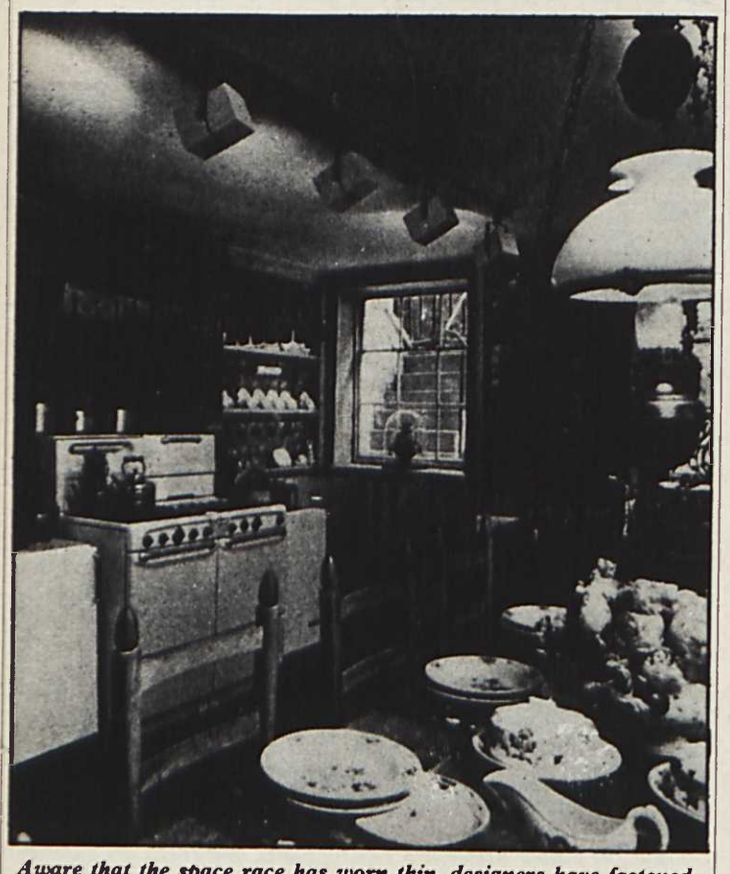
really are, which of course raises the price. We are also encouraged to equip this laboratory with every conceivable gadget under the sun and this is reinforced by the illusion that the more we have, the more time and labour we will save. All it means is that we have more toys to play with. We have the *appearance* of efficiency but not the *substance.*

Cleanliness is often stressed, but the space technology influenced design of many products actually militates against hygiene. The chrome trim on the fridge may look good, but all it really does is to provide a good breeding ground for bacteria. Its probably in the area of ergonomics that there can be most complaint. In the space age dream all surfaces must be smooth and level for 'easier working', but in the name of standardisation there is a generally accepted surface height which doesn't take into account the fact that some people are smaller than others. Most women spend a lot of time in the kitchen and doctors wonder why so many suffer from back-ache. Adjustable surfaces destroy the streamlined space age image.

One of the most extreme cases is that of the ironing board. *Which* Magazine had some tests carried out on ironing boards at the Institute for Consumer Ergonomics at Loughborough University in May 1973. They used 7 women of average height 5'4", 7 women around 4'11" and 7 around 5'9", to find the best height for ironing standing up and sitting down. Out of all the brands on the market, they found that no board was high enough for the tallest women or for more than half the average height women, and of course most men are taller than 5'4".

The image of the Spacelab in your home is reinforced each week by Star Trek on TV. It has not been confined to the kitchen but has spread quite rapidly into the rest of the house, appearing in the pushbutton control of the television set and dimmers in the light switch. The space age has been co-opted into the process of selling and most movements, including the Women's Movement, will inevitably follow the same pattern. Whether we can prevent it happening is another matter. Now viewers no longer watch the spacewalks on the TV, it's the energy crisis, ecology and back to nature. And the designers already have the solution. We're going rustic.





Aware that the space race has worn thin, designers have fastened on to the rustic idyll in their attempt to boost sales of domestic equipment. No longer are stoves sold as scientific instruments for technicians but as natural tools for earth mothers

A

Look what we found in the new Grattan Catalogue!

There'll be no more fights over "Match of the Day" in our house. My husband found this Philips 22" colour TV for the family and the portable PYE 14" set for me.

There are lots more big names and electrical household goods all through the Grattan catalogue. Plus many exclusive styles in the fashion pages, all with easy credit terms and all keenly priced.

And when you're with Grattan, you get commission on everything.

Fill in the coupon and you could bring the very special world of Grattan right into your home.

B B



Grattan

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East Parade,
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I am interested in knowing more about Grattan

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Postcode

I am not under 18 years of age.

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LICENCE NO. BD 7930.

GRATTAN,
EAST PARADE, BRADFORD,
YORKSHIRE, BD99 7BR.

A

KENTUCKY WOMEN MILITANCY IN MINES

Geoffrey Sheridan

If the miners decide in favour of an all-out strike, women will undoubtedly play a crucial part in the struggle. When the miners' mass and flying pickets halted coal movements and the operation of power stations during the national strike two years ago, it was their wives who helped to keep the pickets solid, and spoke at factory and student meetings to raise support and cash.

One of the rationalisations for male opposition to women trade unionists is the idea that women are 'soft' - too easily persuaded to reach a compromise with management, and too timid in a bitter dispute to put up any effective resistance to the employers' offensive.

Any man who participated in the wave of equal pay strikes by industrial clerical workers last autumn would tell a very different story. Once persuaded that a strike was necessary, the women office workers at such companies as GEC became the most determined picketers, ensuring that all strikers took their turn in the round-the-clock rotas, and letting the scabs know in no uncertain terms what they thought of them.

Recent events in Harlan County, Kentucky, ought to finally dispel any lingering doubts. Last summer, the men who dig coal for the Eastover Mining Company voted to join the United Mineworkers of America, rejecting the company union which had been installed by the management. But Eastover refused to recognise the UMWA, whose contract terms would include a tripling of payments for miners' health and retirement funds, improved safety, and - not least - the right to strike.

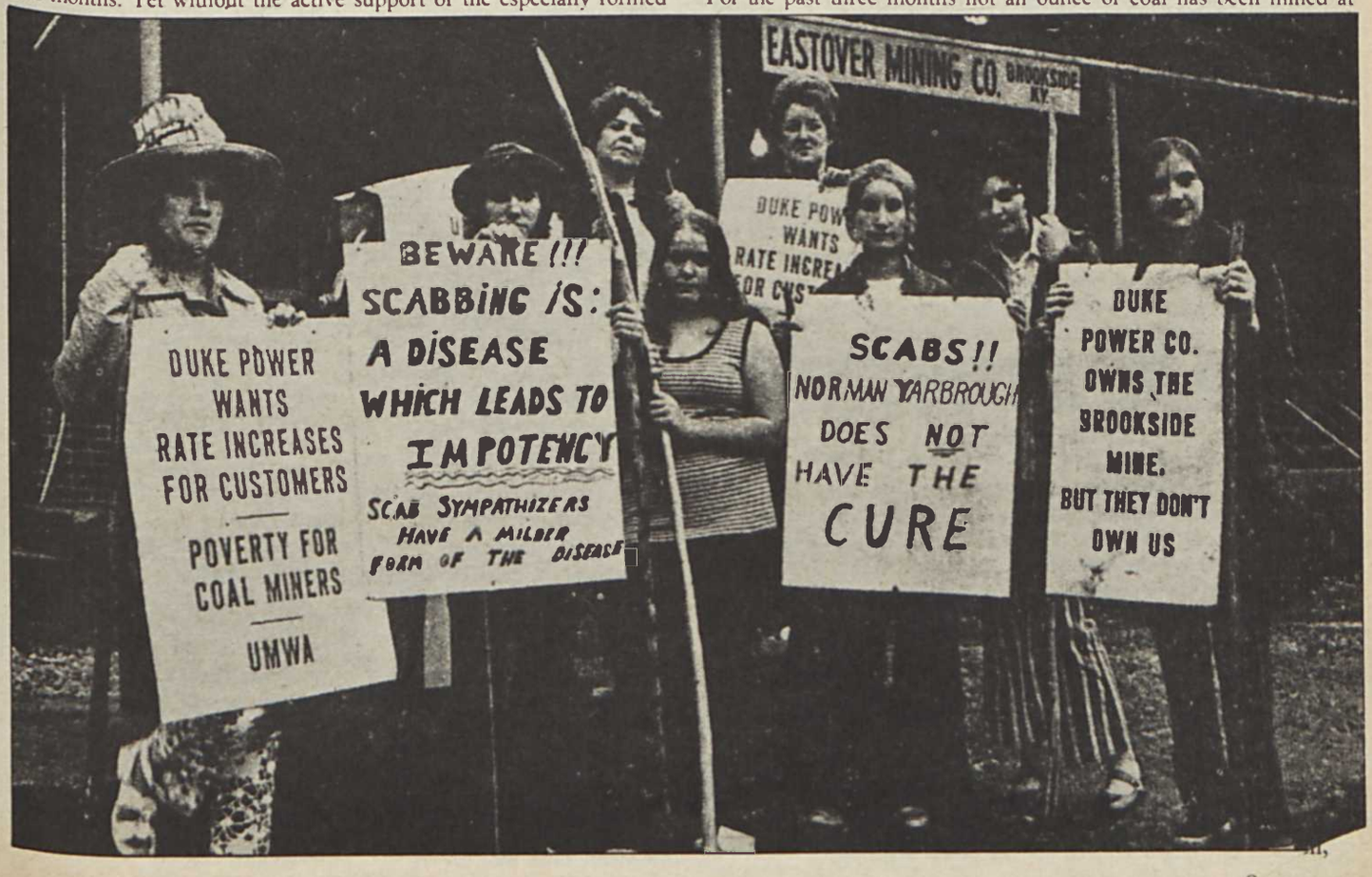
So the miners came out, and they have now been on strike for nearly five months. Yet without the active support of the especially formed Brookside Women's Club - embracing wives, relatives, and friends - it would have almost certainly collapsed. The main problem, as with many strikes in the United States, is blackleg labour, often enough imported from neighbouring states where non-unionised workers feel no allegiance to those across the border. The principal task which the members of the Brookside Women's Club have undertaken is to give the scabs a very unpleasant run for their money.

"Before we formed the club," says its president, Gussie Mills, who cannot walk out without crutches, "the men had limited pickets at the entrances to the pits, and they were just having to sit there and watch the coal being moved." The Brookside club began with a march of 50 women through the town, stopping off at the court house, the local newspaper, and the coal owners' association, picking up recruits on the way. Then they drove back to the mine.

"The women waited for the scabs to come out of the mine and then we talked with them, and we fought with some of them," explains Mary Widener. It is something of understatement. One of the strikers, writing in the Appalachian magazine "Mountain Life and Work", filled in a few of the details:

"The Women's Club carries switches to whip scabs with. This may seem odd to an outsider, who is used to women belonging to clubs that are concerned with things like poetry or flowers. But life is different in Harlan County, Kentucky, than it is in most of America. So stopping scabs who want to cross union picket lines is a natural goal of the club. It is true that sometimes the women have to whip the little scabs."

For the past three months not an ounce of coal has been mined at



Eastover - "and the company store ain't run, either," says Gussie Mills. "We stopped them from putting stuff in the store. We don't allow the trucks to stop here." The women also sent a delegation to nearby High Splint mine to explain the sissues to miners there, but they were met by two armed company goons.

A 20-year-old woman told "The Militant", the paper of the Socialist Workers Party: "One of the thugs jumps out of his station wagon and says, 'I'm going to shoot someone. Who's first?' We weren't intimidated. Two-thirds of the High Splint miners came out in solidarity that day."

As a result of the women's activities, several have been jailed for so-called violations of a court order limiting picketing. The judge fined the women $500 each, and then sent them to jail because they could not possibly afford such sums. "All of the girls that weren't in with us came down and brought us cigarettes and stayed with us," says one of the prisoners. "The jail conditions were cramped and real messy. We had to leave the lights on all the time to keep the roach away. The rats would run across the floor in wide open daylight."

A few of the women whose husbands were also arrested had to bring their children to jail too, such as Dorothy Johnson, who brought her three daughters, aged seven, six, and two into the cell with her. She told "The Militant" that an officer from the child welfare department had tried to take the children away, because a jail was not a "fit" place for them to live. "We run him out of the jail," she added. She is also indignant over the charge made in one newspaper that she was "unmotherly". "What was I supposed to do with my kids?" she asks.

Because the imprisonment of the women threatened to become a hily emotive issue, Judge F. Byrd Hogg, himself a mine owner, ruled that they should be released, provided that they agreed not to join any more picket lines.

The reaction of the women was immediate. "If they take one of us back to jail," declares Gussie Mills, "they're going to have to take all of us. We're all going to go so the jail can't hold us.

"I would probably be dead if it had not been for the UMWA hospital card. I have raised my son on a widow's small pay. I am proud of my son and I am proud of my late husband. He was a one hundred per cent union man and I'm a 100 per cent union woman. I will be on that picket line at Eastover until the company signs that UMWA contract. No contract, no work!"

It was the miners' mass and flying pickets in 1971 which buried Heath's "N - 1" pay norm formula; now the State is organising to smash such tactics. It has set up a central "anti-picket" command at Scotland Yard, which will have special mobile squads to send out to attack pickets. Robert Carr, the Home Secretary, announced this quite openly at a Leicester Tory meeting on 12 November when he said: "We have arranged for police forces to make co-operative arrangements with their neighbouring forces so that at short notices they can send re-inforcements."

The employers are prepared to go beyond the use of police. In the "Evening Standard" on 21 November, Leslie Chambers, the director of the Coal Merchants' Federation announced that they would call in the troops to get past the pickets. Troops have already been used in the Glasgow firemen's dispute. And the courts are always ready to meet the requirements of maintaining the rule of law and order.

Last month (Dec), three building workers were jailed at Shrewsbury - one for three years - for behaving in a "threatening manner" during the 1971 national building workers' strike. The trial had lasted three months. A day after the sentences were announced - the foreman of the jury called them "disgraceful" - the House of Lords ruled that it is illegal for picketers to impede the path of anyone entering or leaving a plant or site.

What this means in practice was learned by the office workers at Salford Electrical Instruments who during their 10-week equal pay strike last summer were knocked down by scab trucks driven out of the factory at break-neck speed by managers. When one of these trucks was tailed by two of the strikers, in order to black any factory that was visited, the police brought charges under the 1875 Conspiracy Act against them. It was the same Act, retrieved from the armoury of class justice, which was used at Shrewsbury. At Salford, however, the magistrate threw the charges out. The management had already announced that any sentence would lead to more trouble than it was worth.

'It is essential that the ruling class discovers it cannot afford to pay the price of attacking pickets. And in the event of a miners' national strike, the picketers will need every assistance, including a bed for the [illegible] when they begin to stake out the power stations.

[redacted]

[redacted]

mortgages

Dear Spare Rib,

18 months ago I had made several thousands of pounds on property dealing and decided that the time had come to take a mortgage in the normal way.

I ended up by borrowing through an insurance broker, completely disarmed by his assurances that, thanks to his guidance and advice, I would receive the best mortgage available!

I insisted that I couldn't care less about 25 years from now and only wanted the cheapest loan available. The following emerged:

Loan (period 25 years)	*£10,500*
Mortgage Repayment per month	*£100*
Insurance per month	*£23*
Total per month	*£123*

I decided recently to cancel my mortgage so that my wife could take out a mortgage in her own name for personal reasons.

Purely by accident, through a friend, she discovered that a building society would lend direct without having to go through the insurance company and in the words of the building society 'it's a pity more people did not realise that many mortgages are made this way'.

The benefits are enormous. Firstly, you do not need an insurance policy therefore saving my £23 per month to the insurance company. Also, I learnt to my astonishment that if you borrow from a building society on an insurance through an insurance broker you pay an extra ¼% interest over your 25 years on your loan.

The name of the mortgage is 'repayment' mortgage and is available to anyone subject to the usual conditions which no insurance company can alter - in other words, if by shopping around a few building societies you cannot get a mortgage - then neither can any insurance company.

A final word of advice is that do not be afraid of asking about an 'option mortgage' - this is now the cheapest form of mortgage and is currently under revision by the government as it is subsidised by the government and may well become even cheaper in the future.

All the best with your magazine.

Terrence Gallagher
12 Eldon Court
St Georges Ave
Weybridge, Surrey.

Women's Centres

In the past couple of years many women's centres have been started round the country. By meeting in one another's houses small groups of women have gained the confidence to start centres where they can talk to other women, share their common problems support one another, and begin to change their world.

These centres are exploring a wide range of activities, developing in response to situations as they arise. For example, a women's centre was started in Chiswick over two years ago. Pretty soon women came in who had been beaten up by their husbands and it became clear that what they most needed was somewhere where they could get away from the home. Chiswick Women's Aid was a pioneer, but there is a crying need for more places like it. Once centre has recently started in Brixton and there are plans for centres in Lewisham, Haringey, Islington, Camden, and in Bristol, Brighton Edinburgh & Glasgow.

Other centres are less easy to define, though all are trying to put into practice some of the ideas of the Women's Liberation Movement. Some are geared to improving women's situation on a day-to-day basis, like the MUMS group at the Brent centre who are a group of working class women bringing up children on their own. Some act more as information centres - giving information on women's legal rights, housing, health, childcare - but at the same time making it possible for women to meet others who come up against the same problems. The following list is not totally complete, but gives some idea of where there are centres and what you are likely to find there. We are still waiting to hear from some, please let us know about any we have not mentioned.

Women's Liberation Workshop
Just moved to new premises. 38 Earlham St., London WC1. Tel. 01-836 6081 open Tues.-Fri., 10.30 - 8pm, Sat. 10.30 - 4pm. At the moment it is used as an information and co-ordinating centre for the women's movement. There ae plans for a library-cum-coffee lounge where women can chat read, buy books and pamphlets; a creche and a duplicating room. The house has a number of rooms which could be used for projects, eg women's theatre, film group, rock band, self-defence classes, self help clinic, pregnancy testing, in campaign against local launderettes, demanding free launderettes from the council, consciousness raising groups. workshop (carpentry, mechanics, electrics), rape-crisis centre etc. Desperately needs help - paint/decorators, wood/carpenters, office furniture, money and your active participation.

Kingsgate Women's Centre
1 Kingsgate Place, London NW6. Tel. 01-624 1952
Open Tues.-Fri. 2.30 - 6.30
Tues, Wed and Thurs Night 6.30 - 10.30
House and £600 to cover bills given by Camden Council. It is open to all women, used as accommodation for women in desperate straits. There's also free pregnancy testing and contraception and abortion advice. Specific meetings Mon 8pm, general meetings - first monday of month is an open meeting to new women.
Wed 8pm, self-help clinic - concerned with female medical problems. Anti-Discrimination group
Thurs 8pm, fortnightly, 'Women in Ireland' group
Friday night, fortnightly, Women's disco
A Feminist Employment Agency will be operating from Kinsgate in January. They need help on their rota and more women to put some energy into the place.

Brent Women's Centre
138 Minet Avenue, London NW10. Tel. 01-965 3324
Financed by an Urban Aid Grant, £2,000 yearly for 4 years. Used for meetings by Wembley Women's Liberation, International Socialist Women, Campaign For Under Fives - a pressure group for play facilities, and MUMS - a group of working class unsupported mothers who organise on a mutual support basis.
Mon-Fri, 9-12.30am playschool
Tues night, General Centre meetings
Thurs night, MUMS weekly meeting

Brixton Women's Centre
207 Railton Rd, London SE24. Tel 01-733 8663
A squat in a house owned by Lambeth Council
Mon-Fri, 10-12 am, playgroup run by mothers and anyone else interested
Mon 8pm
Claimants/unsupported mothers meeting
Tues 8pm Squatting group meeting, mainly squatting private property owned by speculators
Wed 8pm Women's meetings, at present organising an information service, also involved
Thursday night, legal advice, informal discussion with a lawyer. This centre was originally started specifically as a women's centre, but as the women involved felt a need to organise themselves round housing/squatting and claiming Social Security they decided to allow men in. They are about to take 211 Railton Rd as a women's house.

Crystal Palace Women's Centre
26 Anerley Station Rd, London SE20. Tel. 01-659 0924
Women squatted in a shop with a flat above, they need someone to live there. Playgroup starting in January
Claimants' Union organises from there
The basement will be used as a workshop
Needs women/help

Bristol Women's Centre
11 Waverley Rd, Bristol 6. Tel Bristol 38120
Open Mon-Sat, 10-3pm, and most evenings
Information service: pregnancy / housing / nurseries / legal right / pensions / medical, duplicating and typing eg newsletter for Bristol Women's Liberation, Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign (Bristol WACC is currently responsible for the WACC newsletter.
Sell women's literature, also by mail order (sae for booklist)
Free pregnancy testing, Sat 10-12 am
Bed and mattress for homeless women and children in a crisis, which is being used increasingly. They have also applied to the council for an empty property to house women who need a refuge.

Cardiff
Office, 54 Charles St., Cardiff, Wales. Tel. Cardiff 397202.
Monday nights. Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Rd, Cathays, Cardiff.
Open during shop hours
Otherwise contact Jill Boden, 41 Conway Rd., Canton, Cardiff. Tel. 20478. They are planning to have an all Wales Women's Conference early in Feb.

Edinburgh Women's Centre
31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland. Tel. 031-556 5655
Open meeting - Monday evening 7.30
Also women there are involved in study groups on Marxism, Green Paper, consciousness raising; and the Campaign for Nurseries.
They've just obtained a house from the Corporation to be opened as a house for 'battered wives'; they're compiling an information pamphlet on social services in Edinburgh, including advice for free legal help, dealing with Social Security, medical help etc.

Lancaster Women's Centre
33 Primrose St., Lancaster. Tel. 0524-64785
Applied to the University for money
Telephone answering service, pregnancy testing; health group, consciousness raising group, poetry readings. This month women are starting self-defence classes and a Women's Community Newspaper.

Women's Aid

Chiswick Women's Aid 01-995 4430
Financed by Bovis Building Society, a house for women and their children who have been beaten up by their husbands. Runon a self-help basis, with legal advice, health clinic and play group for the kids during the weekdays.

Brixton Women's Aid 01-274 0522
house for battered women and children, the women are applying for status as a registered charity in order to raise money.
Run on a self-help basis, with weekly meetings to discuss management of place and problems, weekly sessions with a solicitor. Urgently needs practical help.

Islington Women's Aid
Plans for a house are going ahead. To find out anything more about what is happening, contact Family Service Unit, 2 Sherbourne Rd., London N7. Tel. 01-609 1116

Glasgow Women's Aid
Plans are going ahead for a house. Any offers of help or jumble, ring Mary O'Donnell, Glasgow 3342912

OVER ONE MILLION ADULTS IN ENGLAND ARE ILLITERATE

There is a story circulated amongst voluntary social workers in which a man was driving his boss to a business appointment, and on parking his car, found that the meter rejected his coin. "Write a note on the windscreen and explain what happened" said the boss. The man pretended to scribble on a piece of paper but as his boss walked away, he offered money to a roadsweeper who was passing and asked him to write the note for him. Because he couldn't write.

The story has taken on the colour of folklore for workers who are engaged in teaching grown-ups to read and write; it is a pitiable yet credible example of the dilemmas in which nearly 1¼ million adults in this country can find themselves daily. Three per cent of the adult population are illiterate or semi-illiterate, meaning they can't negotiate shopping, read the tabloids or fill up a simple form. The figures are conservative, based on studies since the war undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research, and could well be nearer the two million mark according to those concerned with the problem outside the school system.

Like Kleptomaniacs, illiterates become extremely clever at concealing their social handicap. Some carry empty spectacle cases so that they can justifiably ask a stranger to read them a bus sign or a brand name in a shop: "I've forgotten my specs" sounds more acceptable than "I can't read" if it is spoken by an adult.

For someone who can read, it is incomprehensible that another person can't. Not many people could openly admit to such 'dimness', and this is why voluntary workers who staff literacy schemes run by Settlements, fear the three per cent estimate is too low.

The progress to illiteracy starts in the vulnerable years when a child moves from his or her primary school to junior level. At primary school the pupils have teachers who have had some training in the teaching of reading and writing. But in London, according to an ILEA survey in the last couple of years, only 63 per cent of junior teachers had received special and detailed training from their colleges to teach reading. Only one in eight of full time teachers had been trained in this basic skill. In three out of five junior schools there were no full time nor part time teachers with such training.

The child who hasn't caught on at his first school starts junior school immediately disadvantaged and has little chance to catch up. Lecturer Dr. Joyce Morris, who has researched for the National Foundation, found from a survey she carried out in Kent that if a pupil had not made a proper start by eight, he would become backward, and stay backward. She estimates that 10 per cent of all children leaving school are "not up to it." It's more serious than just a man getting into a ladies only compartment, or smoking in a non-smoker: "The media are pretending that in the TV age the printed word is out" she says despairingly "but print is not dead. TV is all right for leisure, but you still need basic reading and writing skills for careers, for living." Here she diverts from Illich and A.S.Neill. "Neither placed literacy very high. That's all very well. You cannot force people to be literary, nor educated, but as children they must have a choice. It is patronising to say 'that group is only ever going to sweep floors', you must offer them a choice."

Dr. Morris gave her views on teaching at the British Association of Settlements' conference in London in November - "Status: Illiterate, Prospects: Zero."

"Children who haven't made a start at infant school have not had teachers who understand. It is important that a teacher loves words, is intrigued by them. Kids are impressed by sound - they love words like splosh and splash, that's why comics are so popular. Pupils need coaxing by an encouraging adult." She feels the long term answer is better training for teachers. But the short term? "Definitely a crash programme. In the States a 500,000,000 dollar campaign has started to reteach illiterates. We can't compete with that but we need more than the two remedial classes at night school that some local authorities are offering. We could utilise the coming local radio to get through to those people who couldn't even read the material advertising classes."

What is there for an embarrassed illiterate adult who wants to enter into the world of words but feels shame at his failure in a competitive society? For a start, he doesn't want to go to a night class which is called 'remedial', but he may not be able to understand the night school syllabus where the reading and writing courses are hidden under something called 'general education studies.'

The Inner London Education Authority have these classes at all but one of their 30 adult education institutes. There is a feeling conveyed in talking to ILEA officials that remedial work *should* have been completed during the school years, but there is an awakening now to the fact that a crash programme for adults who went hopelessly adrift at school is needed. An illiteracy 'centre' is planned where pupils can go up to five times a week either in the daytime or evenings, 50 weeks in the year - thus removing the long holidays which would break up the vital continuity needed.

It sounds like a start but Jenny Stevens, assistant director of the Cambridge House Settlement Literacy Scheme, is sceptical. "That has been planned for a long time" she says "more immediate help is needed, and for more people. She should know - Cambridge House has 470 pupils, with a ratio of almost one tutor to each - and a long waiting list. "It isn't just a learning problem. You have an embarrassed adult on your hands, someone who has been through the school system and failed."

Cambridge House, with financial help from the ILEA, gives its tutors, who are not state teachers, a six weeks training course. More, thinks Jenny Stevens, than some trainee teachers get from their colleges in reading methods. "There's not enough practical training for reading. According to a report called '11,000 Seven year olds', 44 per cent of kids go into junior school with difficulties. There's too much waffle and not enough guidance."

Jenny Stevens joins in the criticisms of the present teacher shortage in London which threatens to give us a wider adult illiteracy problem in the years to come.

The Russell Report on adult education which is currently under discussion before acceptance by Margaret Thatcher, more or less ignores the thorny subject of adult illiteracy. It merely touches on it, but recommends that the biggest effort would be needed to help the disadvantaged. One of the suggestions raised, says the Department of Education and Science, is the setting up of a national body to help finance a central centre, hopefully to co-ordinate what is known about adult education in general. The department feels that the facilities are a 'patchwork' at present and there is no pool of research.

Prof. Alan Bullock's committee on reading is taking a massive amount of evidence on the technique of reading in schools. The committee was prompted into existence by an NFER report which euphemistically declared that there was 'plenty of scope for improvement' in reading standards in this country. The DES promises that Bullock is "really going into things - including illiteracy". His team of 20 has been hard at it since May 1972 and shows no sign of coming to an end. Two members are now in America studying their more formalised methods of teaching reading.

In ILEA schools, 433 primary pupils from an overall 223,782, are 'bussed-out' to remedial classes. At secondary level, 10 per cent of 175,000 pupils need remedial help but stay in their own schools for it. Some find it crushingly embarrassing to attend 'divvy' classes, and sensitive head teachers try to help them within their own forms.

Geoffrey Clarkson, the BAS development officer, likens illiteracy to the lack of confidence which inhibits people in simple pursuits such as riding a bike or swimming. "When I was a student and working part time on the buses" he says "and people asked me where the bus was going when it was plastered all over the front and back, I used to lose my temper. I would have been more sympathetic if they had white sticks. It never dawned on me they probably couldn't read the names. In fact, we nearly called the conference - "Does This Bus Go To Clapham?."."■

Judy Kirby

The Decline and Fall of the Nuclear Family

National Council for One Parent Families

The inauguration of the National Council for One Parent Families took place at the end of last year. Launched in a spirit of celebration and achievement and seeing itself in a new and developing role as serving the whole group of one parent families, whether the cause of lone parent-hood is divorce, separation, illegitimacy, or loss through death or imprisonment. Its former title as National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child was obviously too unrepresentative of current needs and the change of name is therefore not only more than timely but important in itself - direct, explanatory and unambiguous.

There are more than 600,000 one parent families in England and Wales. 100,000 of these are lone fathers. The largest category of lone mothers are 'Separated', some 190,000 families, followed by divorced and widowed, with 120,000 each and the smallest group, single-mothers, 90,000. According to the Department of Health and Social Security figures, there are over 1,000,000 children thus involved and affected who arethe main victims: their material and emotional problems exacerbated by a social structure geared to two-parent families.

The N.C.U.M.C. (started in 1918) has so far had to concentrate on what was then, and is still now, the most vulnerable group of children and lone parents - single mothers and children born outside marriage - still the worst housed, the poorest and the most isolated. It has also had difficulties in obtaining donations and substantial help from those who might otherwise give generously - Why should I pay for someone else's bit of fun?', was a frequent rejoinder. The stigma of bastardy, still a legal term, discriminates against the children. The new council not only seeks to widen it s sources of financial help through its new title, but also hopes to achieve a new relevance for its ambitions. A charter of rights has been set up, outlining their aims.

Firstly, the child must have the possibility of being with the parent under conditions that make his life acceptable. Children are often taken away from single parents because the parent has no-where to live. For single mothers lack of accommodation has reached crisis proportions. Secondly, the right to an adequate income. One parent families are the fastest growing group living at poverty level. Many lone mothers or fathers prefer to stay at home, despite their dependence on supplementary benefit and the restricted way of life this entails, because they wish to give their children the advantage of their presence. Many find that to work full time and to care for a home is impossible. NCOPF recommend that a special financial allowance combined with some element of an allowance to cover the cost of caring functions is essential, in much the same way as for the aged, sick or unemployed.

Thirdly, the Council wants to see the right to special community services - day care during the holidays and provisions for children between school hours and when the parent leaves work. Lastly, the right to an efficient, understanding and accessible legal system. The council advocates the establishment of Family Courts, able to deal in private, in an informal atmosphere, with all the issues that arise in domestic cases.

The council therefore aims to act as a focus for all those concerned with the welfare of one parent families (including the self-help groups which have added a new dimension by expressing the needs as seen by lone parents themselves), the statutory and voluntary agencies providing services, and organisations or individuals with special concern and experience. They hope to interpret the needs of these families, to provide evidence to Parliament, Government Departments and Committees when necessary. And they are waiting to act on the results of the Finer Committee which are due to appear fairly soon. (The Finer committee was set up to look into problems of maintenance, alimony, and allowances)

Women Are People Too

A spokeswoman from the GLC recently declared on a radio program that she had every sympathy for the housing needs of single women and all single people as well. She was referring to the recent case in which six women who were squatting at 90 St. Johns Wood Terrace, North London were evicted by the GLC. The women were using their situation to protest against the policies of local councils who refuse to recognise the housing needs of single women.

It is a well known fact now that 40,000 people in London are homeless while 100,000 properties stand empty but this is the first time that anyone has raised the problem with specific reference to single people. These women have pointed out that while it is easy to raise public sympathy for the very real problems of homeless families there are practically no agencies who are interested in helping single people. Unless you have a husband or a child you are simply not recognised as being homeless because it is assumed that you can find, and afford, accomodation in the private sector. This may be true of men who earn a reasonable wage but because women on average earn less than half than men it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to find any reasonable accomodation in central London.

Jean Meigh of the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) advisory service is acutely aware of this problem. In 1972 the service dealt with enquiries from 11,000 single women looking for accomodation, and in a recent article Ms. Leigh had this to say.

'What is needed is some kind of initiative from the local council. With so many empty houses I am sure something could be done.' What she had in mind was some kind of hostel accommodation but this would really be no solution to the problems of older women who prefer to remain single or to live with other women. In Westminster alone 15,000 properties stand empty and 30% of requests for accommodation come for people requiring bed-sitters; people who are usually bluntly informed that there is no point in them applying for council accommodation because they are a low priority. One of the immediate results of this lack of concern on the part of the council is that more and more single women are being forced to move out of the city with a corresponding decline in vitally needed applicants to fill posts in the traditional female fields of teaching and the social services. There are 1400 school children in part time education in London because of chronic staff shortages but there have been no moves to help single school teachers to find accommodation which would enable them to fill the posts.

The particular case of the St. Johns Wood squat came to the public notice not because of any concern for the needs of women, but because this particular seven room house had been allocated to a conservative MP whose 'Victorian Mansion' had been compulsorily purchased to make way for a school. The MP, a Mr. Drayson already has one freehold and one leasehold property in London and a home in Yorkshire, his only 'dependents' are a twenty one year old daughter and his wife. The GLC were understandably embarrassed when this story came to light and have since announced that there has been a mistake and that the house will after all go to somebody with greater housing needs.

In an attempt to keep the story out of the news the GLC did offer the women an alternative squat but they, quite rightly refused to be bought off. Another squat would be no solution to them or to the hundreds of women in similar circumstances. They would still have no security of tenure, the GLC could evict them at any time. Squatting can only be a temporary solution until such a time as a comprehensive housing policy is brought in which would bring all housing into public ownership and remove the possibility of the exploitation of tenants by private landlords, and force the local authorities to recognise that they have an obligation to house all people, old or young male or female, married or unmarried. ■

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY...

Zoe Fairabairn sifts the media

"There's nothing so submissive as a dead woman" - an unarguable claim, and part of the explanation offered by one Dennis Smith for his stabbing to death of a woman whom he did not even know. Smith was sent to Broadmoor for an indefinite period.

And in Somers, Connecticut, male sex offenders are undergoing aversion therapy in which "12 inmate volunteers lie on a couch as slides of nude children and adult females are flashed on a screen. Every slide of a nude child is accompanied by a painful electric shock to the inmate's groin area. There is no shock when slides of nude women appear. Dr Dominic Morino, chief of mental hygiene, said that the therapy produces feelings of anxiety whenever the inmate thinks of a *child* as a sexual object." (my emphasis.)

And now some news from Westminster, known in some quarters as the Mother of Parliaments. On December 5, our friend Mr Dean of the Department of Health and Social Security was asked if he was going to do anything to alleviate the hardship of the countless women who stay at home well into middle age caring, unpaid, for invalid parents (who would otherwise live in a state institution at great expense) and thus lose any right to a pension of their own. No, said Mr Dean, he wasn't. Dame Joan Vickers then asked Dean how many women on Social Security who had had their benefits withdrawn following allegations of cohabitation by S.S. snoopers, had subsequently been found not to be cohabiting at all. Dean had no answer, but assured Dame Joan that the snoopers "do not observe the domestic activities of claimants in their homes." Questioned on the same theme by Dr. Summerskill and others a few days later, Sir Keith Joseph dismissed the problems of women left moneyless between their "conviction" by snoopers and subsequent acquittal by an appeals tribunal with a few well-chosen words: "By hypothesis, in cases where the Commission's officers have evidence that cohabitation exists, there are resources coming into the household, and often have been for some time."

The Commons have also been restive about the increasing numbers of British men who are offering citizenship-by-marriage to alien women wanting (for some reason) to settle in Britain. To David Stoddart, adverts in Private Eye and other publications offering such marriages for a fee, are "insulting to the status of women." Stoddart's heart may be in the right place, but he's surely missing the point. The legal status of women within marriage is that of a chattel, and *that* is the insult. All that the marriages-of-convenience do is allow a minority of women to take pathetic advantage of this status.

And while we're on the subject of chattels, we can do nothing but shudder for the futures of Anne and Shabanda Shahid, Pakistani immigrants, who are being hastily shuttled back to Pakistan by their "community leader" father who, being an Orthodox Moslem, cannot allow them to attend co-educational schools once they have reached puberty.

More adventures of the Invisible Woman. There was, in fact, a photograph of her in the *Observer* magazine on December 9 - the caption writer clearly did not spot her.[1]



1

Either we're invisible, or else it is pure embarrassment or deep hostility that underlies so many men's insistent treatment of us as if we were not there. Raphael Tuck, MP, who presented a petition against sex discrimination to Parliament on November 29, flatly refused to do so with the words "Women's Liberation" in the introduction, despite the fact that the organisation that had got the petition together bore that name.

It is this same embarrassment that has coined all the patronising pat-on-the-head-names we go by - women's lib, libbers, femlibs, bra-burners, suffragettes even - in order to release men from the appalling task of getting their tongues round the phrase, "the Women's Liberation Movement."

It isn't simply a matter of convenience - after all, the BBC is conveniently known as the Beeb, Ted Heath is conveniently known as the Grocer, but only in chat. In serious business, everyone else gets their full name, but Womens Lib remains Women's Lib. It's the same with "Ms" which may be difficult to say, but is quite easy to write. "Miss Greer (or should I say Ms!)" quipped a recent reviewer of *The Female Woman*. Yes, sir, you should. What else can you call a woman who has been married, is now divorced, and has never used her husband's name anyway?

Women are training to become £60-a-week shifters in West Lothian, but "it's certainly not one up for Women's Lib," according to Ann Westwood, one of the trainees. Readers who have marvelled at the apparent eagerness with which women moving into a "man's job" volunteer such disclaimers to the press, might be interested to know how it sometimes happened (based not on this case, but a comparable one.) The reporter assumes the well-known Media Smirk, reserved for Women's Liberation, and asks, "Is this women's lib? Have you burned your bra?" Embarrassed on his behalf by the absurdity (and unanswerability) of the question, the woman usually says no, to escape his ridicule. This then comes out as a spontaneous direct quote: "it's certainly not one up for women's lib."

It's been a good month for photographs, particularly of the kind that use pretty women to make the obnoxious palatable.

The Daily Telegraph carried a picture[2] entitled "The two faces of Africa" on November 17 - as you know, not even beauty queens are allowed to compete across racial lines in South Africa, so they have a Miss



2

South Africa (white) and a Miss Africa South (black.) And on a



3

similar theme, the same paper carried on its front page on November 23 a shot of Miss United Kingdom being taught how to fire a gun by British soldiers in the Bogside.[3]

The Express on November 23 carried a rather curiously captioned picture of a couple



4

cooking: "Roles reversed: Richard cooks," it said, "while his wife just looks on admiringly." Far from "just looking on admiringly," she has

a huge dish in her hands, and is clearly playing at least some part in the operation. That's what comes of writing your caption before seeing your picture.[4]

British Rail, who emboss a huge "W" on women's season tickets for some reason, have come up with another quaint idea. They are running mini-holidays between Cornwall and London, for women only. Is the object of this exercise to save underpaid or unpaid women workers money on a husbandless break? Apparently not. British Rail doesn't want this tour used by business people who would need to go to London anyway. This is why the tour is restricted to women who, as is well known, never travel anywhere other than in the pursuit of leisure.

The rule book of the Postal Workers' Union recognises women's existence by providing that "feminine gender should be included in the masculine," but this didn't help a group of postwomen who sought redress from an Industrial Relations Tribunal against the Union's ban on women being employed on a permanent basis . . at the moment, a postwoman can be dismissed as soon as a man is available to do her job. Women alcoholics are invisible too - full-page ads appearing in the Scottish press ask the reader to examine his drinking habits to see whether he is, or may one day become an alcoholic; but the copy makes it clear, with its repeated references to "drinks with your girlfriend" "relationships with your wife" that women are not expected to be alcoholics or to need help. And the Guardian headed a story on December 3 about the need to recruit 1,000 more prison officers of both sexes, "It's a man's life - in gaol."

'Whoops, girls, the hemline's up!'

Woman's page editors by Julia Shaw

There has been considerable debate in this country as to whether there should be a womens page in a newspaper or not. In America more and more newspapers are abandoning womens sections as they realize that the old style pages of meaningless chit chat are no longer acceptable to the majority of women. In October Women's Wear Daily did a quick poll of editors around the country and received responses such as :

Washington Post - Womens Pages are an anachronism.

New York Times - The trend to women's pages is gone. We don't do gushy, gooey, rah-rah fashion stories any more.

Boston Globe - We no longer have a Women's Page. Instead we do stories on mastectomies, adoption, how to get mortgages, human sexuality, and the increase of crime among women.

The trend seems to be proceeding at a slower pace in this country. Some newspapers, such as the Birmingham Post, The Sun, the Times and the Guardian have abandoned women's pages as such. Linda Christmas at the Guardian, which has changed its page title to Miscellany, explained that the page had evolved a much broader pattern of coverage, with articles appealing to everyone "taking a caring and lively interest in the complexities of our society". She continues "But we wanted to make the change for another reason as well. The status of women has been a live issue for many years, and the last four years have seen a notable advance. So why not recognize that now by giving the page a less separatist title." The Times now runs a second features page. Shauna Crawford Poole, the editor, explained that a very similar process had occurred there although it had happened without any particular conscious effort. The features change from day to day and are designed to appeal to as many as possible taking into account that the readership stretches through students, middleclass housewives trapped in the home, to old colonels.

The Sun runs a page called Pacesetters. Catherine Hadley, the editor, felt that since the paper is not run on set departments women had a fairly equal basis inside. 'We avoid the intellectual blurb of the upbeat papers and try to use amusing easy information. I think that the majority of Sun readers are women. Some things may be in Pacesetters but they may just as easily be ordinary features. For instance in Pacesetters we might have a piece about putting pills in bubbles rather than bottles so that it would not be so easy to kill oneself, or where to get cheap clothes. Unlike the upbeat papers we would not run an article putting down women's lib, but on the other hand we would have no campaign for equality, except where there is obvious discrimination."

From papers who do still have women's pages there were differing reactions. Jean Rook in the Express said "I detest



(Jean Rooke)

womens pages and womens magazines with the old patronizing attitudes of the 'whoops,girls,the hemline's up'. I don't think that women's pages should be separate from the rest of the paper on the other hand there are still things that appeal only to women, such as abortion or children's clothes. I certainly don't think that women should remain in the home but I also detest hairy legged braless dykey women storming into bars or whatever. Women are only shaped as they are because they should be married and having babies."

The Mail whose editor was a man claimed "We still keep a woman's page because we think that certain things would interest women more than men, such as theatre, ballet, women in other countries". The reaction from the Telegraph was "Of course women are different, haven't you had babies, just you have babies and think about it. Women read women's pages like men read sport, and I loathe magazines like Spare Rib." Mikki Doyle in the Morning Star approached the problem from a different angle. "There are those that argue against women's pages. As long as women suffer discrimination it is essential to have women's pages but we have to change their content. This has a twofold purpose, one to reflect the special interest created by discrimination and secondly to raise understanding, thus arming women with the knowledge of what to do. Thus we run articles on questions such as anti-discrimination, abortion, outstanding women in other countries and socialist states. Cookery and fashion appear in other feature pages. I think that it is essential that there are as many magazines as possible like Spare Rib." It seems to me that even if newspapers change the page title they are still only compromising. For those who don't, who is to say that women should only be interested in abortion and children's clothes and not be interested in general news. This is only a perpetuation of the myth that girls only like dolls and boys cowboys and indians. It is vital that men should not only express an interest in such matters but actively involve themselves. In order to achieve this, subjects relating to so-called women's topics should be given equal representation and spread evenly throughout the paper, thus



(Mikki Doyle)

making no distinction from any other topic. Any paper which does otherwise is demeaning the status of women. I feel that papers such as the Times and the Sun raise the issue though not by any positive action of their own. On the other hand to take the Sun as a case in point. I feel that whatever they might say they are still far more interested in titillation stories, of the how to get your man and look dainty and seductive syndrome. I would also argue that even a paper like the Morning Star with an expressed political commitment is only comprmising. If cookery and fashion appear in other features why not everything else as well?

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Women as Agents Provocateurs in Education

If you are interested in classes discussing women's liberation, contact the Workers Educational Association, 9 Upper Berkeley Street, London W.1. They require a minimum of ten people in your area to make up a group for a course, but told us it was worth getting in touch even for a smaller group because they might have had other requests.
Your local education authority will require a minimum of 13 people to make up a class. Since they aren't always sympathetic to women's liberation, you will need to have the minimum group at least.

Cajoling the Client

A conference on women and architecture was held in December at the North East London Polytechnic to convey the message that the door to an architectural career is wide open to women.

The speakers, six women architects (finished models) and two sociologists, attempted to analyse why more women aren't applying for courses in architecture. Quite rightly they blamed the schools and the lack of technical teaching resources available for girls. They blamed career guidance officers and discouraging mothers. They blamed the image of woman in society and they blamed women themselves. But not a word was said against architecture itself. Architecture, we were assured, was 'immensely creative', 'great fun' and 'thoroughly worthwhile'. Yet, as the conference wore on, the basic unasked question became increasingly obvious; would women want to work within the structure and priorities of the architectural profession in its present form?

Kate Makinstosh, former Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, now working with Ahrends, Burton and Kovalek, gave the opening address. She selected and discussed two criteria for good architecture. Both were concerned with the appearance of buildings; 'sensitivity to site' and 'dynamic lift to the area'. She provided a number of illustrations ranging from St Anne's Church Limehouse amongst the docks (dynamic lift to the area) to her own local authority housing in Dulwich - Dawson House. She was asked if she included social considerations under 'sensitivity to site', and if she made a communal area in Dawson House which people could use for a meeting place or a creche. She replied that the local authority would never have agreed to a specification which provided such non-profitmaking space. Discouraging facts of life for anyone contemplating embarking on the prolonged architectural training.

Ruth Drake, Santa Raymond and Ursula Mercer described the life style of the woman architect. Without intending to, they underlined the appalling demands careerism makes on an individual - demands which place an impossible burden on a woman with a dual role.

Ursula Mercer has no children and has been a practising architect since 1945 but at a cost - 'no time for social life'. Jessica Mycroft with two children and one on the way, said that she has been forced to retire to the 'petticoats of architecture'. Santa Raymond said that she saw her career taking a similar path. She deplored the fact that a woman's life is divided up into before children, after and during. She suggested that a woman architect should keep going but 'spread her career thinly'. She wants to start a part-time architects office; the organisation would be full-time but each person working there would be part-time.

A solution perhaps for a few, but for the most part, the conference substantiated the views put forward by Emma Charles in 'Building Blocks', Spare Rib no.20. She suggested that it's time for de-architectising architecture 'to make the architect merely a humane technical advisor to help people create the kind of home uniquely suited to their needs.' It's certainly time to re-think a training which produces people who refer to the tedium of 'cajoling clients'; and to question lecturers in architecture who remark that 'the purpose of architecture is to move us.'

Rose Parker

SPARE PARTS

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This month, through seasonal surfeit, and terminal blues, pitifully reduced to promises promises, of better things to come.... apologies.

It will appear later in the Spring.
Next two issues to be on: DO YOUR OWN PRINTING. From potato cuts to silk-screening, to producing your own newspaper.

Whilst hoping that this can be put to good use in the coming months,
a happy new year,

Stephanie Gilbert o.

Women at Cambridge

Cambridge Dons, perhaps the largest collection of Misogynists ever assembled in one place have suddenly woken up to the fact that the new anti-sex discrimination green paper could affect them.

In its present form it would mean that all Cambridge Colleges, the large majority of which are strictly male preserves, would have to allow women to apply for teaching posts. If they did not, they could be brought before an Industrial Tribunal.

Professor Henry Dyer (who prefers to be known as Swinnerton Dyer), Master of St. Catharines College, Cambridge and with ambitions for the Vice-Chancellorship was first to realise this potential threat and circulate a letter among his fellow Dons stating that "The proposed Bill should, if necessary, make it clear that one of the cases where sex is a genuine occupational qualification is for teaching and analogous staff in a single sex educational establishment". Otherwise, he says, "we must expect that as soon as the necessary legislation is passed some Mens' Colleges will be brought before an Industrial Tribunal by a woman complaining that she has not had a fair opportunity of being appointed to a Fellowship".

Mr. Dyer goes on to say that the Green Paper appears to contain "no real threat" to the student admissions policy of single sex Colleges. In Cambridge there is only one woman's place for every 10 places for men and among teaching staff the ratio is even worse.

The letter was a private document circulated to a number of Dons but it was fortuitously leaked to the Students' Union who promptly distributed 10,000 copies throughout the University as part of the campaign to get Cambridge Mens' Colleges opened up to women.

Jill Lewis, the newly elected President of Cambridge Students' Union said in a reply "We cannot tolerate that such attitudes be actively encouraged . . . without calling for a strong reaction. We are opposed to any College remaining single sex".

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Bunny to Rabbits

"You look old. You have lost your Bunny image," the International Bunny Mother told Patti Colombo, an eleven-year veteran cottontail at the New York Playboy Club. Another aging Bunny, Carmelita Atwell, was told: "You no longer look like the girl next door. You're going into womanhood." With those curt bits of Playboy philosophy, the Misses Colombo and Atwell and two other hutchmates, all over 28, found themselves out in the street.

Like airline stewardesses before them, the fursome foursome fought for their right to grow old in their jobs. Last week they took their case before the New York State Division of Human Rights and charged that Playboy had discriminated against them on the basis of sex and age, and that their union was in cahoots with management. One of the Bunnies, Nancy Phillips, who was a leader in a successful arbitration case against Playboy over seniority in 1971, insisted that she and her coplaintiffs had none of the Bunny image shortcomings set down in a "Checklist of No-Nos": wrinkled eyelids, sagging bosom, flabby underarms, bulging tummy, crepy neck, droopy derrière and rippling thighs.

The no-no list is a serious matter at Playboy clubs, where each Bunny's image is rated quarterly. Even so, the four complainants believe that image is not at issue. "As in 1971," Miss Phillips alleged, "seniority is the cause of the problem." They are eliminating senior girls, she said, so that the club can move the Bunnies anywhere it wants without worrying about seniority. For his part, Robert Mozer, an attorney for Local 1 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International, denied his union was in collusion with Playboy and pledged they would "fight for" the Bunnies.

Denmark gets 'part-clown and part mini-Hitler' by Nan Paulsen

Denmark's recent elections showed a new trend, completely different from the normally very stable political life in this country. All five traditional parties in the Folketing suffered heavy losses; but the number of parties was increased to ten. The most stunning election achievement was the gain of 16% of the votes by the Progress Party which made this newcomer the second biggest political party after the Social Democrats, whose vote was reduced from 37% to just over 25%

The secret of this fantastic success is the personality of the leader of the Progress party, Mr. Mogens Glistrup. As a successful lawyer and an expert on tax laws, he first came to the notice of the general public through a TV debate in February 1971, where he sharply criticised the tax system and demonstrated its futility by disclosing that he himself, in spite of being a millionaire, paid no income tax. The symbol of this - a tax form with a zero for tax percentage - became his banner and probably gained a lot of customers for his thriving business of helping well-off people to diddle their tax returns. But strangely enough, it also gained great popularity amongst the toiling masses who groan under tax percentages ranging from 40% to 60%. The police started investigations against him concerning tax fraud; shortly after that Mr. Glistrup started his party with 8 members chosen from the staff of his office. The name "Progress Party" was bought from someone who happened to have registered it 50 years ago. The most important point on the party's programme was, naturally enough; the abolition of taxes. Everybody earning less than 4,000 pounds should be exempt from tax, and the tax of the highest income groups should be lowered considerably. To make this possible tremendous cut-backs in public expenditure were envisaged. According to Mr. Glistrup, the Ministry of Housing should be abolished overnight. There was also no need for a Ministry of Pensions - a doctor and a business man would be sufficient to decide on the merits of each pension applicant individually. Universities only needed to train engineers and doctors. If people wanted to study psychology, sociology, Sanskrit, history or music or any other such rubbish they would have to pay for it themselves. All over the country Mr. Glistrup attracted crowds ten times bigger than any other politician and held his audiences spell-bound with his endless harangues against the "papermongers" in the civil services and the stupidity of the old parties. Once he gained power, he assured his listeners, the ranks of the faceless bureaucrats would quickly be diminished. When their jobs had been demolished they would simply be offered a six months re-training course and thereafter would cease to be the responsibility of the state. Glistrup's line also includes set-backs for the liberation of women. If they want to learn basket-weaving (or anything else) at evening classes, or to have their children looked after in nursery schools, they will have to pay for it without subsidies - otherwise they must stay at home. When asked what unmarried mothers should do, he came up with a plan like this. "If there are say 30 such mothers in a district with 70 children, we'll pay 10 of them to look after the children and the rest will jolly well have to go to work. We don't need qualified people to wipe babies' bottoms".

At first, the established politicians regarded Glistrup's antics as a circus number and suspected it to be a trick to divert attention from the slowly mounting police investigations concerning him. But opinion polls, though wildly fluctuating, showed a tremendous following, and finally, on the day of reckoning, one voter in six voted for this fantasy of a world without bureaucracy and income tax.

The explanation, of course, lies mainly in the voters' great disappointment with the established parties. During the government of both conservative coalitions and the Social Democratic party, Denmark's taxation and public expenditure rose spectacularly. The rate of social progress has been great; as far as social security is concerned, the country must be rated as one of the foremost in the world, but somehow this progress seems to have come too fast. Not only do people grumble about high taxes, but the bureaucratic machinery erected to run the welfare state has all too clearly demonstrated its inefficiency. The great number of people who, through the rise in the standard of living, have been elevated to the middle classes, do not feel they get nearly as much from the state as they pay for. Also reforms like the abolition of the ban on pornography, and widespread liberalisation of education have left many bewildered. The reaction has spawned Mogens Glistrup, "part clown and part mini-Hitler".

He's a Good Cop... On a Big Bike... On a Bad Road.



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"ELECTRA GLIDE IN BLUE"
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Californian Women Lead the Way

In California, women are in the front line of campaigns to protect the environment and to protect the consumer. A woman spearheaded the drive to regulate oil drilling in the Santa Barbara channel; another led a campaign to ban certain pesticides nationwide; and a small group of women launched a week-long beef boycott last April.

Santa Barbara grandmother Mrs. Lois Sidenberg, for three years President of Get Oil Out (GOO), dramatised her fight against Off-Shore oil drilling by flying a plane over a new drilling platform, trailing a stream of protest signatures in the air. Ida Honoroff, 59, led a fervent and lone campaign this year to get the pesticide Monitor-IV banned for use on lettuce. And three San Fernando Valley housewives, spurred by a letter in a local newspaper that something should be done about high beef prices, used the chain letter system to launch a nationwide boycott of beef.

They called their organisation, 'FIT' (Fight Inflation Together).

Other organisations sprang up in almost every state, and an estimated nine million homes took part in the boycott. June Donovan, one of the founders of FIT, says she thinks California affluence has made the state's men apathetic on political issues. 'There has always been apathy - the common man has never done enough politically in this state,' She says. 'But I think after we women started this movement, the men began to get interested because it's their pocket-books that are affected too.'

Mrs. Sidenberg of GOO says that in the case of battling against oil drilling and oil platforms off the Santa Barbara coast, the men rallied to the issue in greater numbers than women.

'The trouble is that it is mainly men who are on the other side of the issue - like the Chamber of Commerce. They think Off-Shore oil drilling helps the local economy, but they're really being very shortsighted.'

The Santa Barbara oil drilling drew worldwide attention in January 1969, when a blow-out sent a vast oil slick oozing down the coast, blackening beaches and smothering sea birds. When there was an attempt to install another platform 10 months later, it had to deal with an aroused citizenry. A boat from GOO was anchored over what was thought to be the drilling location, and Mrs. Sidenberg took to the air in a protest plane. Eventually the platform was anchored, but it was no sooner in place than it overturned. Soon afterwards Santa Barbara citizens won a moratorium on new oil drilling from the federal government.

Mrs. Sidenberg, an experienced pilot, recalls that when she flew over the up-ended platform, she felt an irresistible urge to dive-bomb it. 'I know exactly how those kamikaze pilots felt,' she says. 'I was so hypnotised by that thing that I dive-bombed it for 3,000 feet. I scared the living daylights out of the man flying with me.'

Despite the fact that there is now considerable pressure to resume drilling because of the national oil shortage, Mrs. Sidenberg thinks that GOO's campaign has been spectacularly successful. 'We would have had 72 platforms out there,' she says, 'As it is we have 13. And we are also fighting to prevent the removal of the moratorium on new drilling.' GOO wants technical guarantees against further blow-outs, and oil drilling equipment put underwater if possible.

Mrs. Ida Honoroff, an unrelenting lifelong battler for environmental causes, attacked the use of organic herbicides, highly lethal in their undiluted form, after reading Rachel Carson's 'The Silent Spring' in the early 1960's. When she was denied her right to present her case in a hearing on Monitor-IV in Los Angeles, she took over the microphone for 45 minutes, ignoring an embarrassed police sergeant who had been given instructions to get her down from the platform. She launched her attack on Monitor-IV when she discovered that, contrary to official assurances. lettuce contaminated with residues of the pesticide had been shipped to local supermarkets.

Some are more equal than others with the UN 'Family'!

The concentration of women United Nations staff in the non-professional and lower ranks of the Secretariat is unmistakably revealed in *The Situation of Women in the United Nations*, just published by UNITAR (The United Nations Institute for Training and Research). The report, based primarily on the proceedings of the colloquim of Senior United Nations Officials held in July 1972 in Austria notes that of the women employed by the UN, 84.4 per cent belonged to the 'general services staff' that is, they are office workers. Even amongst the professional women, very few made it anywhere near the top. Only recently has the first woman, Ms. Sipila of Finland, been appointed to D-2 or Director level. She'll head the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, but she won't have much high level female company; at directorial levels the male-female employment ratio stands at 37:1!The new publications records a series of such statistical information and documentary evidence of the inferior position of women within the UN but more importantly it presents specific proposals made by the participants at the Austrian colloquim to end discrimination and provide equal employment opportunities for women at the United Nations. Revision of discriminatory rules, increased recruitment of women, equitable job placement, and improvement of working conditions are amongs teh steps urged by the reports, which also stresses that the situation of women at the UN is reflective of their position in society at large. *The Situation of Women in the United Nations* is now available from the United Nations institute for Training and Research at $2.50 a copy.

Un-equal pay

According to statistics drawn up by the Swedish Employer's Federation recently, it appears that while a woman industrial worker in Europe earns three-quarters of what a man earns, - in Japan she earns only half his wage. The list shows how large a percentage of a man's wage a woman earned in 14 different industries. It shows figures for 1961 and 1971 and does not take into account the suggestions, made in April this year in Denmark, for an agreement about equal pay.

For 1961 the list was as follows:

Sweden 70%
Norway 68%
Denmark & West Germany 67%
Finland 66%
Switzerland 64%
England 57%
Japan 49%, while there were no figures for France, Iceland, Italy or Holland.

For 1971 the figures looked like this:

Sweden 83%
Denmark 77%
Italy & France 76%
Norway 75%
Iceland 72%
Finland 71%
West Germany 70%
Switzerland 65%
Belgium 68%
Holland 61%
England 58%
Japan 54%

Our bodies - ourselves

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a class action suit in North Carolina on behalf of Nial Ruth Cox, a 26-year old Black woman who was sterilized against her will eight years ago when she was 18. The suit asks that the North Carolina Sterilization Statute be declared unconstitutional and that $1-million in damages be awarded to Ms. Cox for the "physical and emotional injury" inflicted by the operation. Ms Cox "is not and has never been" mentally deficient, said her attorney, Brenda Feigen Fasteau, coordinator of the ACLU Women's Rights Project. "This sterilization operation undoubtedly occurred because the plaintiff is a Black woman, who at the time of the operation was a minor and a member of a welfare family." Ms. Cox stated that her mother consented to the operation under threat of removal from welfare for the entire family, and was told that the operation was a "temporary" tying of her daughter's tubes. Ms. Cox said that "nobody explained anything to me before the operation. Later on, I saw the doctor and asked him if I could have another baby. He said that I had nothing to worry about, that, of course, I could have more kids." Ms. Cox did not learn that she was sterile until 1970. The class action suit claims that the North Carolina Statute "invidiously discriminates" against women, black persons and other racial, ethnic and cultural minority groups, poor people, welfare recipients, unmarried persons, persons under 21 years of age and unwed mothers and fathers, in violation of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. It also asserts that the Statute "unduly interferes with the privacy of individuals by preventing persons from controlling their own reproductive functions."

This case follows on the heels of that of Minnie and Mary Alice Relf, 12 and 14-year old sisters, who were sterilized in June by a Montgomery, Alabama family planning clinic. The girls' mother, who "authorized" the operation by signing an "X" on a surgical consent form, believed that she was authorizing more birth control shots; the girls had been receiving the now-banned Depo-Provera. The girls' parents are suing the government and the family planning clinic for $1-million in damages.

overseas cont'd.

SWEDISH BISHOPS PRONOUNCE ON SEX

Luteran bishops in Sweden have caused a minor sensation by stating firmly that sex should be confined to marriage and that extra-marital and pre-marital sex is wrong. They have also come out strongly against divorce except where it is 'the lesser of two evils.'

The bishops were asked to state the Christian view on sex and marriage for a committee on sex education in schools. Their pronouncements became headline news in a country whose sexual attitudes are among the freest in the world, and which has just passed a law providing for instant divorce.

The bishops' pronouncements were applauded in church circles, attacked by some newspapers and greeted with disbelief by many Swedes.

RED FLAG CALLS FOR WOMEN'S POWER

'Men and women should share household chores,' an article in a recent issue of Peking's theoretical journal, *Red Flag*, bluntly told its male readers.

Despite their 'equal status with men,' the article said, Chinese women still faced a few well-entrenched male chauvinists upholding 'such reactionary fallacies as "women are backward" and "women are useless".'

The *Red Flag* article - 'Work Hard to Train Women Cadres' - coincides with the restructuring of the All-China Women's Federation through its provincial congresses - a process now nearly completed.

Women, according to the article, are a 'gigantic revolutionary force, holding up half the heavens ... Without their participation, our Socialist Revolution and construction cannot succeed.'

Because of their near-slave condition in the pre-Liberation era, when they were 'bound by the four ropes of feudal political authority, clan authority, religious authority and the authority of the husband,' women have developed a 'great enthusiasm for socialism.'

To liberate women from 'household drudgery' and to 'correctly handle the contradiction between revolutionary work and household labour,' men must share the chores. But there are other means, including 'late marriage and family planning, which should be encouraged.'■

SHORTLIST

Use this space as a notice board. Send your notices to Shortlist, Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS.

EVENTS

Child At Risk Vigilantes

Arising out of the anger about the death of Maria Colwell and the total mismanagement of the affair by the authorities. The group intends to campaign for a proper children's rights law and to publicise where people can go for help. For more information, petition forms and pamphlets about activities, contact: Sonia Lawson, 39 Stoke Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. (Tel: Leighton Buzzard 4156)

Protection Prevention

If you need a solicitor to help fend off a wife-batterer, or do not wish to have your kinds taken into care for the same reason contact Protection Prevention at Juvenile Aid Centre, 7A Sinclair Gardens, London, W14. (Tel: 603 5885) In most cases it should not be necessary to go to magistrates or Juvenile Court.

Women's Rights

The NCCL is hoping to extend its women's rights work by appointing a full-time women's rights officer. If they can raise the money they want to: run campaigns on laws affecting women, take up cases on behalf of women; run a women's right education campaign; and research into discrimination. They will be holding a conference on Women's Rights for women who work outside the home on Saturday February 16, 1974 at Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC2. Conference fee: £1.50. For more information about any of the above contact National Council for Civil Liberties, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

There will be an All Wales National Women's Liberation Conference, hopefully on February 9th. For information about this contact 54 Charles St, Cardiff (Tel: Cardiff 397202) on Monday nights or Jill Boden, 41 Conway Rd, Canton, Cardiff. (Tel: Cardiff 20478); or 108 Salisbury Rd, Cathays, Cardiff.

Germany

The womens Movement in Frankfurt, composed at present of autonomous groups Weiberrat and Frauengruppe Revolutionarer Kampf (FRK) have a new womans centre at 72 Eckenheimer Lanstrasse. At the moment it serves as a meeting place, with more things being worked out. Brot und Rosen in Berlin have a list of women's groups in Germany plus a few listings from other countries. To get the list write to Frauenzentrum, Berlin 61, Hornstrasse. Include international postal coupon.

THEATRE

Marguerite Duras

York Arts centre are having a season of work by Marguerite Duras. Two of her plays are being performed; 'La Musica' and 'Lovers of Viorne'. There will also be a week of five films which are either based on her novels or with screen plays by her. York Arts Centre February 19 - March 16.

A South African Season

Directed by Athol Fugard, the season of South African plays at the Royal Court Theatre continues until February 9th. 'Statements after an arrest under the immorality act is described as follows by Athol Fugard; 'Within the context of a policeman's statement I have tried to explore the reality of two people and a relationship terminated by an arrest under the Immorality Act.' 'Statements' alternates with 'The Island' and 'Sizwe Bansi is dead'. Full details from The Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London SW3.



Yvonne Bryceland in 'Statements'

The Party

Trevor Griffiths has written a play, The Party, now being performed at The Old Vic. Set in London in '68, it shows the confusion and impotency of various factions of the English left confronted with the events in France. Trevor has tried to put forward the views of certain key figures at the time. Gerry Healey, SLL, is represented by Tagg, played by Olivier. He is the man who met Trotsky, who's obsessed with forming the revolutionary party His own actions crucify his message, since he himself is an authoritarian bastard. His power, based on his religious sense of conviction, appeals to Shawcross in whose house the group meets. Shawcross is a working class intellectual. He's left his roots behind him and finds his job as a producer in television sterile, having taken the class struggle into the media world. This paralyses him and he expects to solve his problem by psycho-analysis.

Trevor has attempted to indicate some consciousness of sexism by parodying the men's chauvinism. Of the four women in the play, two are involved with Shawcross through marriage, and both draw on 'female intuition' to warn Shawcross about the fist in Tagg's head. The other two women are IS sex objects with no way to express themselves. I guess Trevor puts himself also into Sloman, played by Frank Finlay and representing David Mercer. What's the use of theory, he cries at the end, in this drawing-room atmosphere. Out of revolutionary struggle leaders may emerge, but there are no leaders in this self-conscious group of Marxists. It is, unfortunately, not a political play. At no time does it transcend itself to make the politics meaningful. It is, in the end, a play about those who see themselves as revolutionaries but end up acting just like politicians. The answer, for Trevor, is, forget it. Prance about being liberals and do well what you're presently involved in, but don't take yourself too seriously because you won't find salvation only cynicism.

The gulf between Shawcross and his brother who is still obsessed by football and getting enough cash to start his own business defines the gap between the guy who's made it, can afford to be despairing and politically 'superior', and the guy who's still stuck in his working class confines, yearning for a game which is real but without any choices.

M.R.

BOOKS ETC.

Shelter

Shelter have compiled two reports. One, 'No place in the Country' is a Report on Second Homes in England and Wales, Price 20p. This is a study of the rising amount of second homes and the effects this has on the inhabitants of the particular areas, and homelessness in general. Shelter demands that the government should hold a nationwide inquiry to discover the true facts, how many homes are in fact third homes, who owns them, what happens to families prevented from buying homes in their own community and what is to be done about it.

The second report 'The Kids Don't Notice' (Price 15p) shows the effects of bad housing conditions on children, psychological and physical. It is presented as a series of case histories. They are not dramatic but very commonplace stories and it is a very easily readable report.

Both are obtainable from Shelter, National Campaign for the Homeless, 86 Strand, London WC2 (Tel: 836 2051).

Also available is a report on Coventry Council Tenants. (Price 35p).

The National Health Service in England and Wales: A Marxist Perspective. Marxists in Medicine. 7p.

For those, Marxist or not, who are confused as to just what is what in the British National Health Service after 25 years, this readable pamphlet is the answer.

Dr Julian Hart is a Welsh GP

working in one of the most beautiful and poorest mining villages in South Wales. He has done considerable research into the relationship between communities and their doctors and has strong views on the effects of social policies on the health of the people. His references are meticulously traced to source, his argument is clear and he is quite prepared to admit the existence of other points of view.

His article concentrates particularly on the future of the general practitioner, and as such, should interest anyone who ever consults a National Health Service GP. It includes a useful and fair historical survey of the past and present achievements of the NHS.

TELEVISION

Women At Work

The BBC series 'Women at Work' is invaluable educational material and must be shown in schools everywhere. Suzanne Davis, the producer, describes the purpose of the programmes as, 'unearthing people on the factory floor to show what their attitudes are and what obstacles they face.' Rather than relying on detached analysis from experts seated in the studio, Suzanne Davis went into factories and homes to look for the roots of discrimination. She presents a good cross section of attitudes, sprinkles them with statistics, and allows the viewers to draw their own conclusions. Some of the conclusions are pretty grim; the idea that men have priority at work persists at all levels, women are viewed as temporary workers at every juncture of their lives from school onwards and many women have completely internalised a low estimation of their worth. On the other hand the majority of women speaking on the programme are actively aware of discrimination and sharply critical of male attitudes. Even the women who feel that they shouldn't have equal pay say that they are willing to accept low pay purely to cushion male egos and keep the peace on Friday nights.

The programmes have been excellent myth exploders. 'Women only work for pin money' was exposed at every turn. A woman who gets up at 5.30 to make her husband's breakfast before she goes to work 'because I feel guilty going out to work', isn't working for pin-money. 'Women won't do heavy work' was shot down by film of nurses working in a geriatric ward. 'Women are good at boring repetitive jobs' was shown to really mean that 'women's work is often what men won't do.'

The psychological manipulation of women as a workforce came over clearly. The pressures on women to take sexually acceptable work roles was expressed by a hairdresser who said that women in an engineering job would be 'degraded by men' because they 'wouldn't want a woman there.' But the real eye opener was provided by the wartime propaganda films included in the first programme 'What did you do in the Great War, Mummy?' The clips demonstrated how opinion on 'woman's place' changes according to the circumstances of the country. 'We should be proud of our young married women who manage to combine marriage with a full time job,' enthused one commentator who went on to praise creches where women could leave their children in 'kind and safe hands'. Ideally the programme should have contrasted the war time recruitment drive with the post war propaganda when men wanted women out of jobs and back into the home - the era when working women were accused of creating 'latch key kids'.

Two of the series are still to be shown - 'Part of The Union' and 'The Lesser Half'. The former investigates why few women are active members of unions. A particularly relevant question as women are now joining unions twice as fast as men. The obstacles facing women are made crystal clear - implacable male prejudice and the burdens of dual work:

'my husband wouldn't like me to go to union meetings unless I made his tea first'

'it's the natural make up of women - they don't want to take part in unions' (a man)

'if they held meetings in the factory or if they told women where the meetings are they'd go' (a woman)

But the picture is not one of total gloom. The programme ends with women workers discussing their experiences on the picket line during the APEX clerical workers union strike for equal pay at GEC in Salford.

'once we came out on strike a great friendship developed between pickets'

'you realise you have a body of people behind you - you no longer have to fight battles on your own.'

But, as to the extent to which unions are really backing the women's cause, the programme remains silent.

The final programme in the series looks at work which is not considered to be work - housework.

R.P.

'Part of the Union' BBC 2 7.05 pm January 30 repeated the following Monday at 3.00 pm

'The Lesser Half' BBC 2 7.05 pm February 6 repeated the following Monday at 3.00 pm

Background notes on this series can be obtained by sending a large stamped addressed envelope to:
Women at Work,
BBC-TV,
Villiers House,
The Broadway,
London, W5 2PA

APOLOGIES

issue 19

Renaissance women in the age of technology

Two captions in the article on women artists of revolutionary Russia were placed beneath the wrong illustrations. *Leaflet advocating professional training for women workers* by Gustav Klutsis was beneath *Costumes for the Maid in the film 'Aelita'* by Alexandra Exter, and the caption for the leaflet was below the costumes.

issue 20

The photographs of the exhibition of work by the Women's Workshop of the Artists Union are by Diane Olson a member of the Workshop. The photographs of a workshop held by the Women's Theatre group are by Philip Ingram.

EXHIBITIONS

Lucinda Mackay

Lucinda Mackay began sketching street scenes in Edinburgh. Jeffrey Daniels, curator of the Geffrye Museums in Kingsland Road, London E1, offered her an exhibition and suggested the theme of East London drawings; this suited the directions of her work at the time, and she had come to know something of East London after teaching there for a year. Her drawings, all done on site, record the decrepit, disappearing buildings in the East End. One house was actually demolished the day after Lucinda had made a drawing of it. Prints and drawings of East London Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, London E2
January 30 - March 3.

National Museum of Wales

Alison Beynon who graduated this year from the School of Textile Design at the RCA, has recently had her work included in the museum's permanent changing exhibition. She designs and makes textile jewellery, woven fabrics and other embroideries.



Stratford High Street. One of the drawings included in Lucinda Mackay's exhibition at the Geffrye Museum. She says that she was sunburned while sitting sketching on site.

FILM

Alpha and Beta - the heros of Mike Nichol's new film 'The Day of the Dolphin'. George C. Scott plays an innocent scientist who teaches two dolphins to talk English - but their new found skills are used by a right wing group in an attempt to assasinate the president. Passe story, but some beautiful photography.



SELLOUT

Extracts from the notes sent out to applicants to the Faculty of Medicine, University of Manchester 1973. It couldn't be more blatant, could it?

"So far the intake of women has been restricted to about 25% of the total intake, although the proportion has been as high as 33%. There seems to be increasing evidence that the National Health Service will accommodate more women doctors, but on the other hand *it appears that the "practising life" of women graduates is falling rapidly.* There is, therefore, a serious dilemma about the proportion of women who should be taken into medical schools; the present signs are that it is likely to increase.

Generally speaking, the grades we ask for range *around CCC for boys and BBC for girls,* taken at the same sitting."



From Penthouse. Sent in by Bill Parker ■

RAPE

'Andy is OK. We look after him in here and see he gets in no trouble in the nick. He only done in reality what lots think in our secret minds. He needs help for if he ever gets out of here though.' I found this quote in a book by Tony Palmer on sex-offenders. It was a note written by one prisoner about a man who was inside for raping ten women in one month. This particular person was classified as sub-normal and probably psychopathic. He is not typical. According to a study carried out by Professor Menachim Amir in Philadelphia 'Studies indicate that sex offenders do not constitute a unique or psychopathological type; nor are they a group invariably more disturbed that the control groups to which they are compared.' Professor Amir also found out that 90% of group rapes were planned, as were 83% of pair rapes and 58% of single rapes.

If normal men who are not suddenly overcome with uncontrollable lust are capable of rape then are all men potential rapists? Susan Griffin in her article on 'The Politics of Rape' feels that 'Far from the social control of rape being learned comparisons with other cultures lead us to believe that it is rape itself that is learned.' She feels that although it is against the law the glorification of rape is built into our culture. Men must be sexually aggressive and women must be sexually passive and if ever the twain are to meet it must, necessarily be by force. The myth goes on to tell us that this is what women actually want because it saves them from making any decisions.

I don't intend to delve further into the psychology of rapists. Since I find it inconceivable that any man could derive pleasure from forcing a woman to have intercourse against her will I must conclude that the reason for it is to inflict pain. We are therefore not talking about poor pathetic men who are constantly at the mercy of their sexual urges but men who hate women and want to hurt and humiliate them. This is however not the attitude that the law or society takes. The conviction that women invite rape is difficult to shake and that is the reason why, as one solicitor told me, rape is regarded as one of the easier charges to get off.

One of the first pieces of evidence that the police will look for before pressing a rape charge is signs of a struggle. They expect a woman to fight for her virtue. In practice this has been proved to be the worst defence against rape as violence will usually be met by greater violence in the attacker. A friend of mine described her experience.

She was about twenty-two at the time, a student teacher, married and with the sort of down to earth attitude which helps people deal with problems of this kind. While walking home late at night down a quiet riverside street a man came up behind her, put one arm across her throat and threatened to knife her if she screamed or struggled. She did neither, but merely started to talk to him rather as one might to a frightened animal or a child. Once it became clear to him that she was not going to fight he became less aggressive although every time she moved sharply or unexpectedly he would start to threaten her again. It was an unpleasant experience but at least she felt reasonably in control of what was happenening. Afterwards she lectured him for some time about his thoughtlessness. 'I said; it was alright for me, I didn't think it was going to have any lasting effect on me but he could have wrecked somebody's life.' Her attacker reacted by becoming all maudlin and apologetic but tried to convince her that it was all her fault. . . .she had looked at him in the tube, she had taken the quiet road instead of the main road, and why was she wearing such a short dress? With all that leg showing she was asking for it. She had in fact been quite unaware of being followed until she felt the arm around her neck but her innocent actions, the normal behaviour of a free citizen were taken to be provocative, not only by him but by the police as well. They quite simply did not believe that she had been raped. She was too calm and cool, her actions were too sensible, she told me that she had always known that one day something like this was bound to happen.

'I'd always said that if someone did try to rape a girl then the very worst response would be to scream and beat him about the face with your fists. The sensible and rational approach would be to make no response at all, no matter what you think about it. I'm much more frightened of being hurt than I am of being fucked, this is what the police hated.' She hadn't really wanted to bring the police in at all but once she had got home and had a bath it occurred to her that she had a duty to inform them unless another woman less able to cope should find herself in a similar position. So she telephoned the station, told them her story and then went to bed. A little later a squad car arrived, she was told that she would have to go down to the station to make a statement. For six hours she was kept, telling her story to various different police officers and being examined by a police doctor. They would leave her alone just long enough for her to drop off to sleep and then wake her with another cup of tea and a different person to tell her story to. It was quite clear that they didn't believe her and that the grilling was intended to make her admit that it had never happened and yet she had no motive whatever for misleading the police. She had given no description and didn't want to press charges so revenge could not have been her motive and she had not expressed any desire even to go to the police station so they could not really put it down to a need for attention. After four hours of questioning an extremely unpleasant CID officer was brought in who said 'Really we're getting a bit tired of this, you can hardly call it rape why didn't you scream?' By this time he had quite a good idea about her attitudes to sex and morality and obviously did not approve of them so he lectured her in an extremely paternalistic manner. In the end he believed her but obviously felt that she was such an unpleasant person that she probably deserved it. At this point she was informed that they had fished a woman's body out of the river at that place a few days ago - with her throat cut.

It didn't stop there, a few days later two young officers turned up at her door in a Panda car. They were extremely pleasant and apologetic, seemed to wish to take direct responsibility for the attack because it had occurred on their 'patch', could they come in for a cup of tea to discuss the matter? As they talked she could feel their eyes

travelling up and down her body and almost hear their thoughts, 'I wonder what it was like?'

Possibly the most unpleasant reaction came from her own doctor. Sensibly she went to see him as soon as she got home told him what had happened and asked for a VD check up. He was furious and refused to believe that she had really been raped. He was quite convinced that she was trying to cover up for some infidelity while she was in London.

What has been the effect on her? Well every time she hears a particular Irish accent she feels 'bad and hateful' and she is much more jumpy than she used to be. She is aware of being followed or being watched in the tube. Her freedom has been limited by the experience. She says that; 'I can't claim it didn't affect me. It was a very unpleasant experience. I still think I behaved sensibly but it doesn't mean I liked it. The idea, certainly, in the police mind is that if you don't put up any active resistance you have liked it.'

This woman didn't take the matter any further so was saved the further humiliation that a trial entails. I talked to a solicitor about how a rape case is conducted and gleaned some interesting information.

RAPE is what occurs when a man forces a woman to have intercourse against her will. If he merely frightents the shit out of her, beats her to a pulp but doesn't penetrate, it will be either

a) Attempted rape which usually involves a fair amount of violence and a clear indication of intent. This is a pretty serious offence, or,

b) Sexual assault which can be anything from touching a woman's thigh in the tube, to jumping out of a dark alley and thrusting a hand up her skirt. This is considered to be a fairly minor offence and is dealt with either by a fine, or a relatively short sentence.

Rape itself is extremely difficult to prove because it is unlikely that there will be witnesses and the case has to hang on one person's story against another's'. Generally speaking I was told; 'Attitudes are loaded against the women in rape cases mainly because of the belief that women invent stories, are not reliable witnesses and say things to get their own back on boyfriends.. The police often think that in a tense sexual situation women will fantasise. It's for this reason that they often give women a hard time, to be absolutely sure that a rape did occur.

The myth that all women are likely to make up stories about strange men raping them is so deeply embedded in the legal mind that a kind of unofficial set of rules has been evolved. Starting with the assumption that a woman should fight for her honour. If she doesn't do that then she has no honour, nothing to lose and therefore cannot be raped. If on the other hand she did fight her honour will be assessed by her past sexual experience, so; If a woman is unmarried and has had a) an abortion, b) a child c) is on the pill it is assumed that she is promiscuous and therefore doubt will be shed on her evidence. In law, neither signs of struggle nor proof of honour are necessary to get a conviction but in practice they always are. The classic defence in these cases is that the woman consented and the classic way of proving it is to drag her character through the mud so that the jury will not believe her story.

THE DEFENCE: As in any other trial the defendant, (the rapist) is assumed innocent until it is proved otherwise. The defence usually follows a fairly standard pattern.

a) The defence have the option to dismiss up to seven jurors if they think they will in any way be prejudiced against the defendant. In rape cases this option is always used to get rid of any women on the jury. As there are usually not more than two this is not difficult.

b) When a sympathetic, all-male jury has been organised the next procedure is to verbally assassinate the victim. The gynaecological report which was made at the time of the rape is often used in questioning because it contains details not only of what occurred at the time but also of the gynaecological history which will include such things as abortions, births, and methods of birth control if used. It is assumed that an all male, middle class, middle aged, jury will feel that a woman who has had abortions or is on the pill is fair game for anyone. If such details are not available there are other ways of proving 'bad character'. In one particularly unpleasant case in America a woman was accused by the defence of such things as, leaving a job because she was found to have been having sex in the office. Having sex with men while working in a health club, spending a night with one of her neighbours and when she complained of unwarranted intrusion into her private life and denied the allegations the defence counsel ended by asking whether it was true that her children played sex games together. The defendant was acquitted. The victim now had the humiliation of sensational press coverage to add to the horror of rape.

Theoretically this kind of thing should not be allowed to happen because the judge should see that irrelevancies are not brought in but this obviously depends on his attitudes. In the recent case of a woman from Sussex university who was raped while hitch hiking, Melford Stevenson, the presiding judge made no attempt to prevent the defence from attacking her, bringing out details of her gynaecological history and allowing grossly misrepresentative interpretations to be put on them. In this case the defendant changed his plea to guilty half way through so a conviction was inevitable. The judge showed his prejudice by giving the man a suspended sentence, and summing up with; 'As rape goes it was a pretty anaemic affair. 'the man had made a fool of himself' but 'this girl was almost equally foolish. This practice of hitch hiking must be stopped.'

Again the victim had suffered not only the fear of being driven around by a strange man for an hour, the misery of being raped, the horror of being abandoned in a wood miles from home late at night but on top of this had suffered humiliation at the hands of the police and the courts and had salt ground into the wound by lurid publicity in the Sunday papers; and she hadn't even wanted to press charges.

THE PROSECUTION.

It is up to the police whether or not they decide to prosecute a man accused of rape. They are unlikely to do anything unless there is a fair chance of a conviction, hence the sifting out process at the beginning. One of the most important things from the police point of view is what is known as *corroborative evidence*. This is the evidence of someone who saw the victim immediately after the incident and can confirm that she was distressed, battered, or her clothes were torn. Although this is not actual evidence it is usually the nearest they can get and so it is allowable. If the corroborative evidence is given by a mother or close relation it is usually looked on with a certain amount of suspicion because it is assumed that a girl would lie to her mother.

Medical evidence: If a woman had struggled or been violently assaulted medical evidence would bear this out. Also it would be relatively easy to prove that she had been a virgin if such was the case. With a mature woman who had not resisted all that such an examination would prove is that intercourse had taken place.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS: Previous convictions cannot be used in evidence against the defendant unless his counsel actually attacks the character of the victim in which case the old English laws of fair play come in. If you say nasty things about my past I can say nasty things about yours. If a man had had previous convictions his counsel would be very careful of how he questioned the victim because he would not want this fact to come to light.

COLOUR: it will not come as a surprise to many people that it is easier to get a conviction in a rape case if the woman is white and the man is not.

There is no doubt that being cross questioned in a rape case is an unpleasant experience. It is arguable that there is no point in reporting it. There is certainly no point in making a complaint out of revenge and probably no point if you can be fairly sure that it is a one-off situation involving you and nobody else but if it is a stranger and there is any chance that he might attempt to do the same thing to another less capable person than you, you have little alternative. Probably the best way to deal with the situation with the least personal trauma is to report it immediately. Go straight to the nearest police station so that they can see you as you are and will be able to corroborate your story themselves. With luck they may be able to catch the man immediately and then there is a fairly high chance that he will confess. That would save at least the humiliating cross examination.

Rape, like wife beating, peeping and many of the other crimes that men perpetrate against women are difficult to understand. Prison sentences won't help. Mental hospitals seem to be irrelevent. The solution is a different kind of relationship between men and women. A relationship which is not built out of dominance and submission.

Angela Phillips

hitch your ☆ rhythm to a star

Astrological or cosmic birth control, or the Jonas-Rechnitz method, as it is also called, was 'discovered' in the mid-fifties by a Czechoslovakian psychiatrist named Eugen Jonas. He and many of his country men and women were Catholic, proponents of the relatively ineffective rhythm system. Since he was concerned about the emotional effects that abortions, just legalised in Hungary, would have on his patients, he set out to discover an alternative method of birth control.

Jonas felt that an ordered universe had to mean that the creation of a human being was based on more than just mere chance. After long study, he uncovered a constantly repeating cycle that correlated the angles of the moon and sun to periods of women's fertility.

The system first met with a great degree of scepticism, astrology being viewed as a pseudo-science, but in 1958, a Budapest gynaecologist, Kurt Rechnitz, verified Jonas' laws with material from a maternity clinic where he was working. He added the technique of using the system with the rhythm method to achieve greater reliability. The two systems combined became known as the Jonas-Rechnitz method.

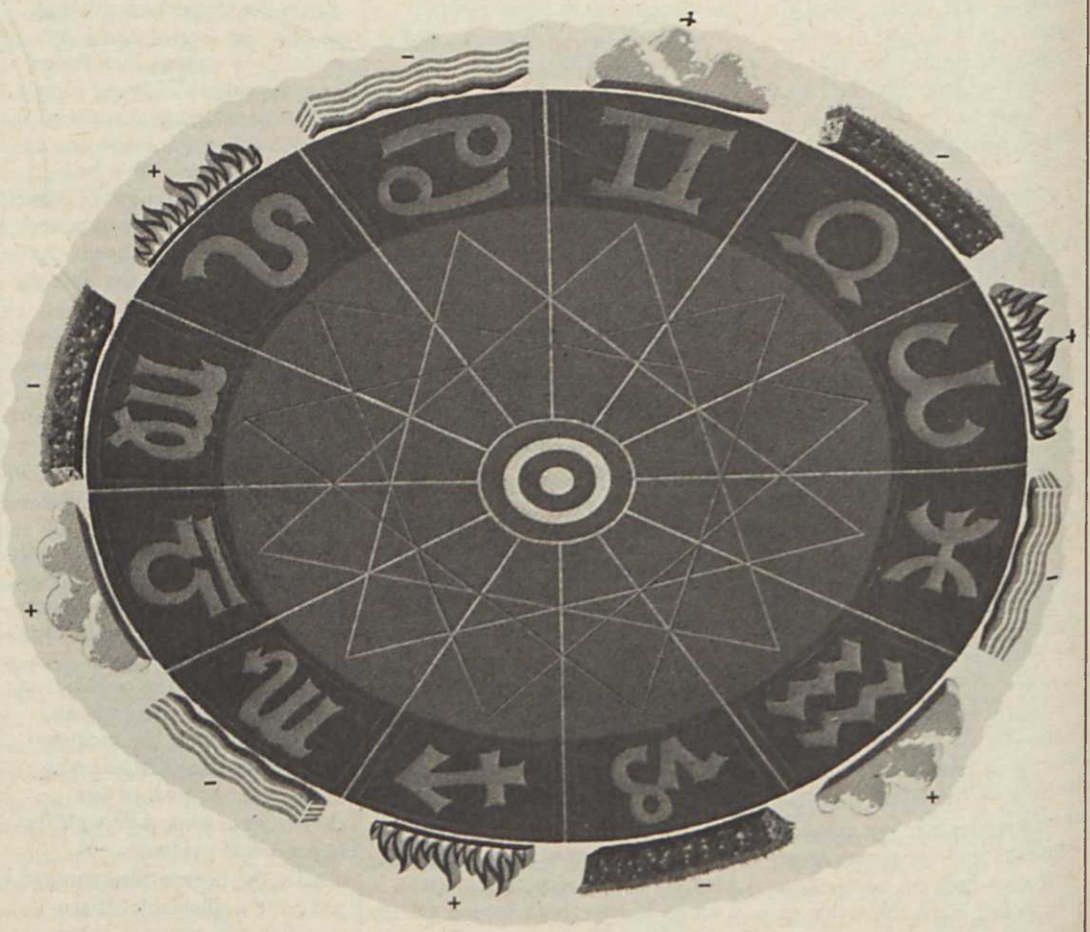
In 1968, a full-time birth control research centre named Astra was begun under Jonas in Nitra, Czechoslovakia. At the end of January, 1969, Astra's scientific board evaluated the experience of 1,600 women who had used the Jonas-Rechnitz method for four months. They recorded a 98.5 effectiveness. In 1970 the board reported: 'We ... have examined 1,252 appraisable cases which occurred between July and December 1968 and which participated in the test for 12 months. We have found that out of the 1,252 cases examined, 1,224 could be positively appraised, and only 28 cases proved negative'. That's a reliability of nearly 98%, about the same effectiveness as the pill. Because of the method's proven dependability, it has taken hold solidly in Eastern Europe and Germany; in Czechoslovakia it has been accepted by the Catholic Church as morally acceptable form of birth control.

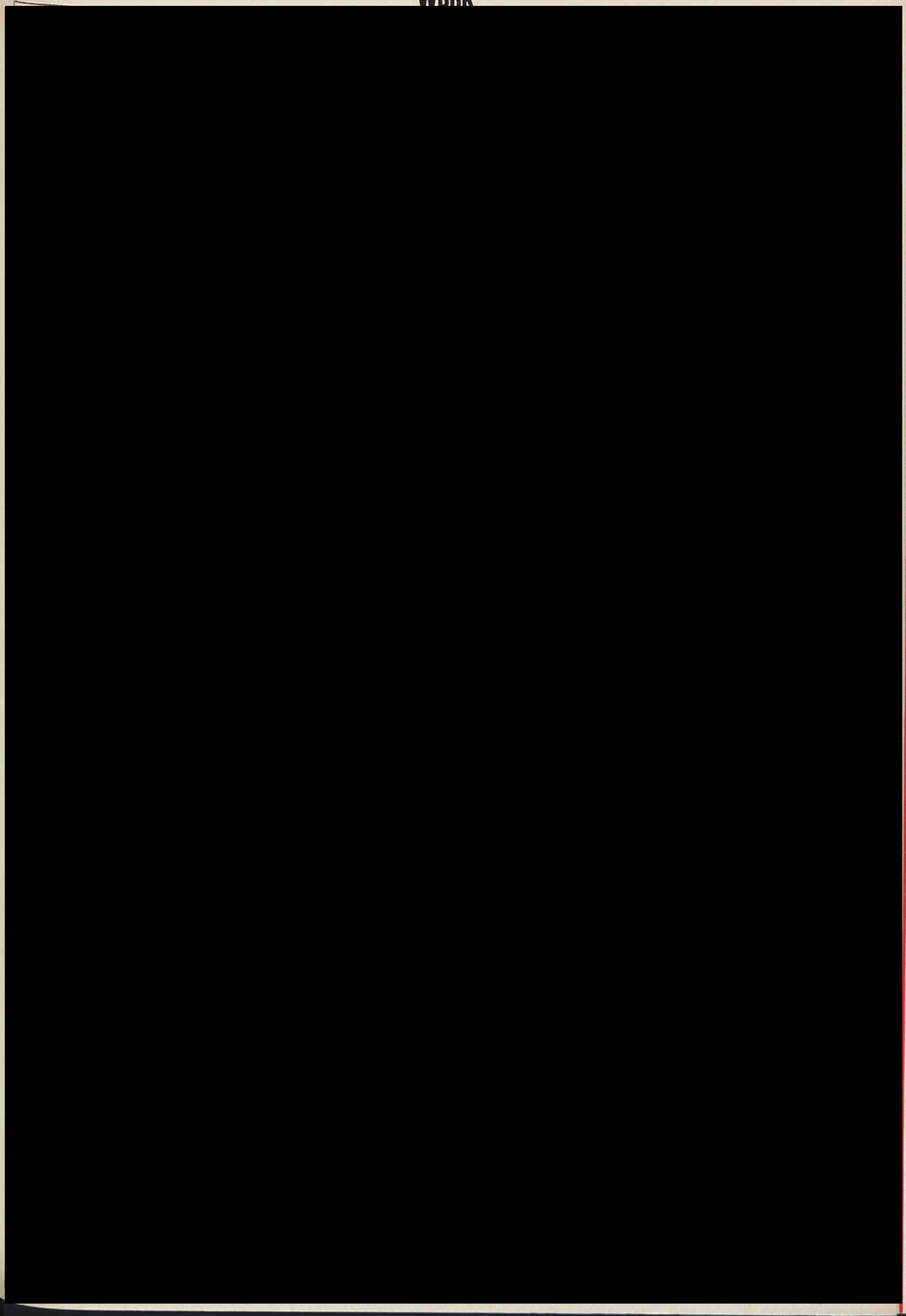
From the historical information to date about astrological birth control, it sounds ideal. But there are complications. The method is based on two rhythm cycles - the biological rhythm, which assumes ovulation to be on the fifteenth day from the first day of the period, and the cosmic rhythm. The principle of the latter is very simple: a woman is fertile when the number of degrees between the sun and the moon at the moment of birth recur on the sky, an event which happens once a month. It's primary disadvantage is that if you abstain from sex on all the appropriate days (most months the ovulation time and the cosmic fertility time do not coincide), you will be left with only 15 'safe' days out of 30.

Anne has been using astrological birth control for two years now. She explains how it works for her: 'I was born on August 29th, 1939, at 10.07 pm in Oregon, USA. This is an easy relationship to calculate because the sun and moon are close to exact opposition, sun 5′ of Virgo, moon 9′ of Pisces. There are exactly 184′ between the sun and moon, and this constitutes my natal angle. The next step is to consult an ephemeris, the astronomical table which gives the exact position of each plant for every day of the year. For December I found that this angle occurs on the 10th. According to Jonas the fertile period is 3½ days before the natal angle recurs, and ½ a day after. To be safe he recommends five days of abstinence: three before, the day it recurs and one after. I add to this 5 days abstinence around my biological ovulation period (Jonas in fact recommends ten days to be absolutely safe), and then mark it foff on a acalendar. So far nothing has gone wrong.'

Anne admits that the system sounds complicated, but she says' You can sit down at the beginning of the year and work the whole lot out in one go, it then becomes quite simple.' The principle of astrological birth control can also be used to help women who have difficulty in conceiving. When an astrological birth chart is constructed it becomes apparent that there are two or three days a year when the periods of cosmic and biological fertility coincide. This means super-fertility.

If you are interested in trying astrological birth control, there are a number of books and articles about it: Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, the women who first reported on Jonas' work in their book *Behind the Iron Curtain*, also wrote a book entitled *Natural Birth Control*, available from Compendium, price 65p. You can write the the Aquarium Research Foundation for *Natural Birth Control* by Art Rosenblum, 5620 Morton Street, Philadelphia, Pa19144, and you can send 15 to Llewellyn publications, Box 3383-MSB, St Paul, Minn., 55165, along with your birthplace and birthdate and they will send you a chart on which the cosmic fertility periods are calculated for a year.







Women's Rights: A Practical Guide

Anna Coote & Tess Gill

To help women to understand the laws, traditions and regulations which affect them, this guide clarifies such questions as equal pay, welfare benefits, birth control, marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody, education, housing, immigration and prison. The authors point out how the law discriminates against women, but also how it can be used to defend their rights. Unravelling some of the red tape spun by government machinery, they suggest changes of many kinds that might improve the position of women. Lucid, informative and down-to-earth, this is at once a self-help guide, a catalogue of evils and a manifesto.

A Penguin Special 60p

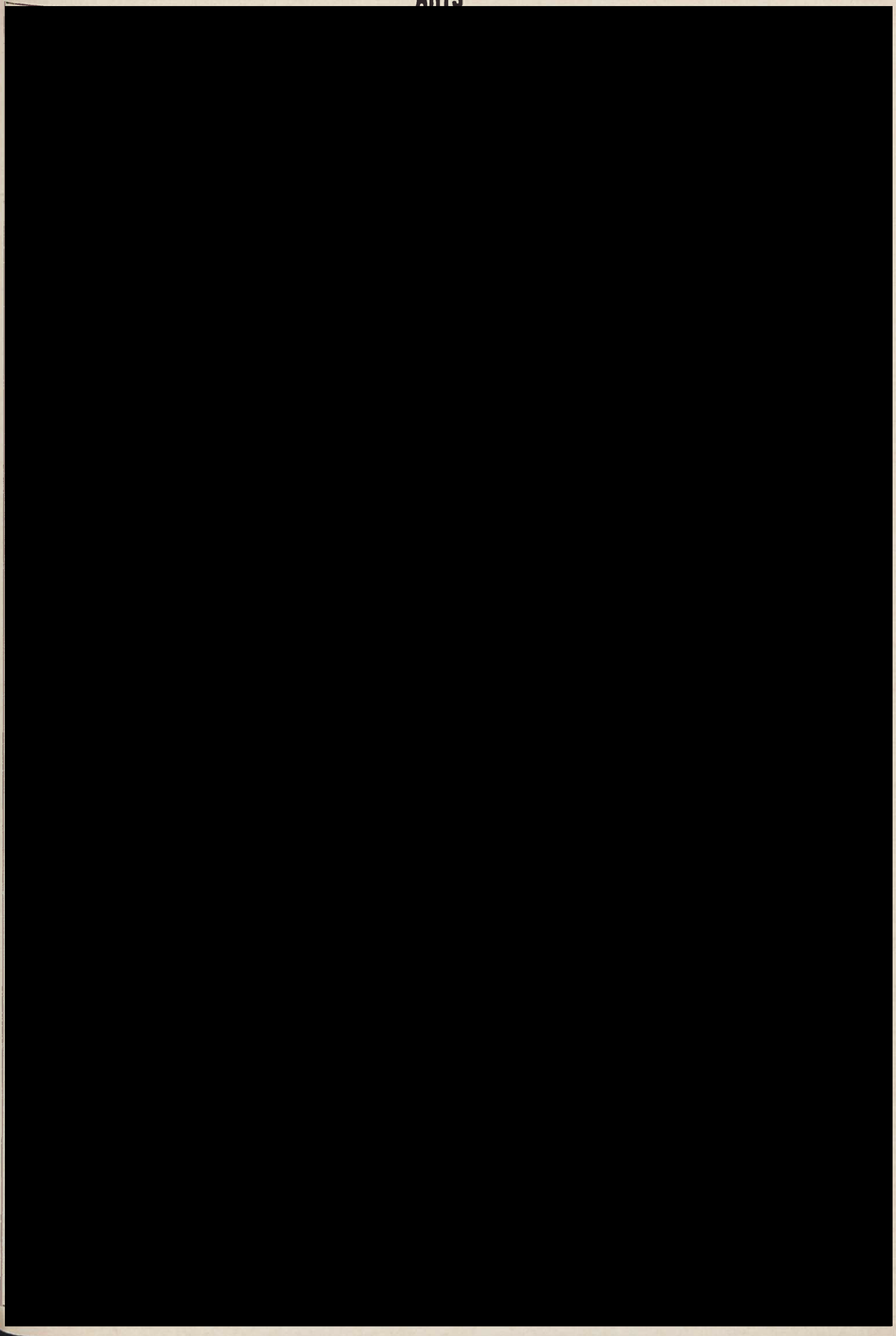
Woman's Consciousness, Man's World

Sheila Rowbotham

An attack on the structure of a society which relies on the subjection of women to support its economy. The author traces the rise of the feminist movement as a result of economic independence and exposes the tendencies of a capitalist society to destroy the family while ostensibly upholding the myth.

35p

These titles are available from your bookshop or, in case of difficulty, can be ordered by post from J. Barnicoat, P.O. Box 11, Falmouth, Cornwall. Please enclose the price of books required plus 7p per volume for postage.





'Mal de Mere' by Michelene Wandor with Maggie Nicholls



'Love Food' by Dinah Brooke with Andonia Katsaros

[redacted]



[redacted]

The Women's Theatre Group invited the Women's Workshop of the Artist's Union to organise exhibitions at the Almost Free Theatre during the Women's Theatre Festival. This exhibition included documentation of group projects, slide shows and a display of feminist work. The Women's Workshop held weekly open meetings at the theatre throughout the festival.

[redacted]

THEATRE

Le Grand Magic Circus

At the Roundhouse from January 28 1974 for a nine-week season

Talking to the producer who has seen the show in Paris, and reading the review in *Le Monde*, one is led to believe that the Grand Magic Circus is the greatest thing in European theatrical zest since orange juice in cartons. However, even as a cautionary who has not yet seen the show, if it is anything like the energy and surreal irreverence of their last year's offering, *Robinson Crusoe*, it is bound to provide an evening of vitality eventfulness and invention.

This show is called *From Moses to Mao - 5000 years of love and adventure*, and is based on a historic scenario mapped out by director Jerome Savary, which takes popular assumptions about historic events and figures and sends them up. According to the producer, David Aukin, the company and the show is stronger, thematically more structured than *Robinson Crusoe*, and ends with the closest the group comes to a political statement. The formal 'framework' within which there are variations from performance to performance, is a vaudeville show set in 1912; the company then looks back over past history, and 'forward' predictively. From Moses to Mao.

The company's politics are built round a belief in popular theatre - hence the theme of the circus; in this they are very different from the other enormously successful company which visited the Roundhouse some years ago, *Le Theatre du Soleil* who performed *1789*. The latter have unfortunately folded, partly because the French government withdrew their subsidy. Savary has always believed that the Circus should be self-sufficient, and not rely on subsidies. Obviously this must pay off; they tour their shows, multiple prop and costume changes and all - *From Moses to Mao* will in fact be seen in London before it is seen in Paris.

The company describe themselves as 'professional fete makers', and Savary's statement of his own belief is that he believes 'in using theatre politically, rather than in political theatre' - by which one can assume he refers to the fact that the group projects an independent anarchic spirit rather than including an explicit political message as agitprop theatre does. The surreal energy conceals a certain pessimism about the future of western civilisation if it continues along its present course; the precision of the message is of course a mystery until the show arrives in England; but the narration will be in English, as will a substantial part of the show itself. Song sheets (in English) will be handed out, there will be nudity ('Of course there will be nudity,' said the producer.), energy, surprises and improvisation. On the basis of last year, eminently suitable for children of all ages, as they used to say.

Michelene Wandor

FILM



From Moses to Mao.

EXHIBITION

Stephenie Bergman in the Garage

Stephenie Bergman's first exhibition is starting on February 5th at the Garage; a new gallery near the Women's Liberation Workshop in Earlham Street, Covent Garden. Unlike so many commercial galleries, the Garage has opened it's eyes and it's doors to the extraordinary work being done by women artists. In December, Judy Clark's work was exhibited - clinical arrangements of dropped and discarded matter, reclaimed and collected during limited periods of time; dust, menstrual blood, semen, the contents of a hair brush etc.

Stephenie Bergman's exhibition is open until February 24th. The backs of her enormous canvases reveal that the slabs of colour are not painted but neatly sewn together. Despite appearances, her work is closer to sculpture than to painting and she likens her sewing to welding.

'When you sew' she says 'you have more freedom. You can change things around, cut them up, start again, add bits and contrasting textures. Whereas if you are doing a painting on one surface there's no going back if you make a mistake. You can paint over what you don't want, but the painting loses it's freshness and the colors become dead'.

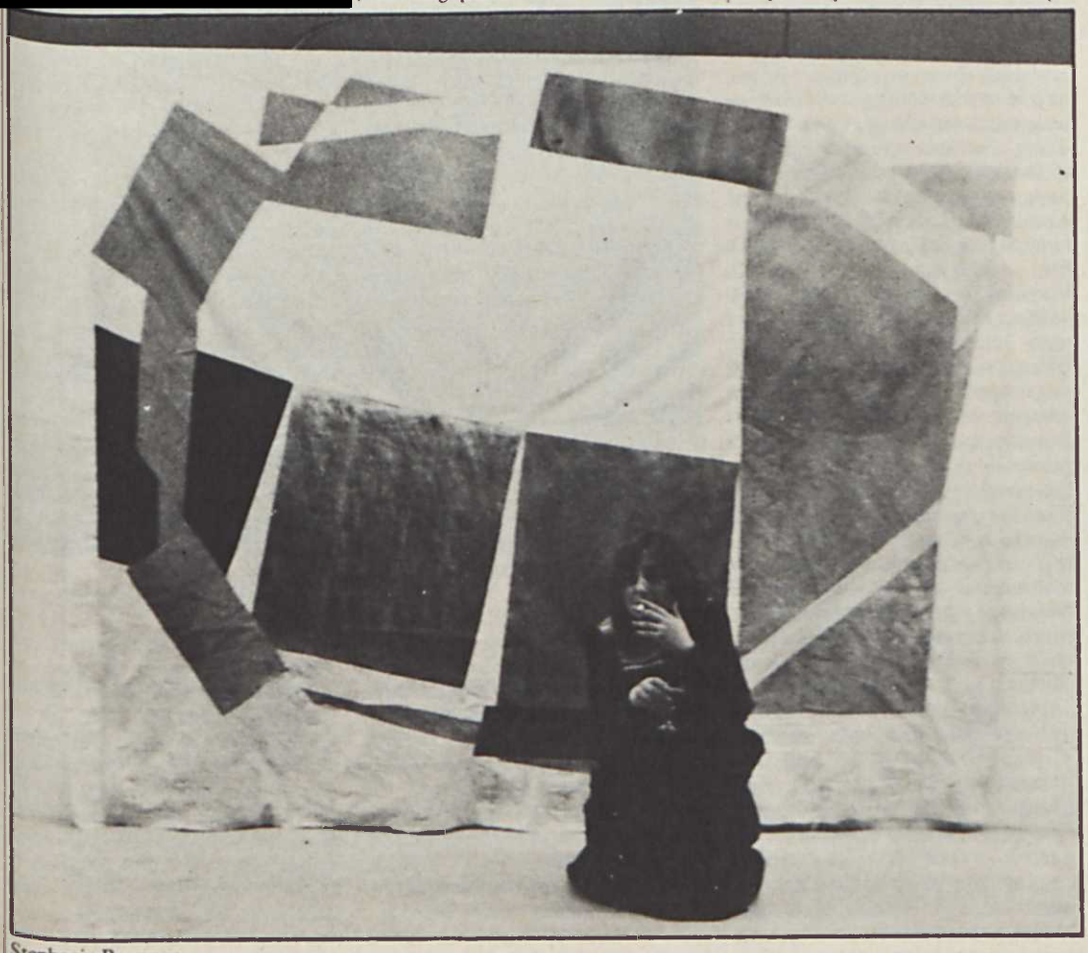
She believes that learning and creativity only come about through action. Working from a preconceived idea bores her; sewing enables her to work spontaneously. 'I usually start off by throwing pieces of colour around on the floor and adding bits and taking pieces away. Something starts to happen, I decide that's it, and sew it together."

Psychologically her method helps her to overcome creative vertigo. She used to find it hard to put paint to canvas, but the process of sewing, dying and cutting up canvas avoids having to face an empty expanse of canvas.

She developed the method when she started to work at home instead of at a studio. Liberated from the highly competitive atmosphere of working in a studio, she began to experiment, using whatever was at hand - a sewing machine, a bath for dying canvas - integrating her work into her everyday existence.

Stephenie refuses to treat her work as precious priceless objects. Nevertheless the paintings really do deserve to be lifted off the floor of her flat and onto the walls of the vast white vaulted Garage.

Rosie Parker



Stephenie Bergman

BOOKS

How Drugs Work
Fisher and Christie
Allen Lane
£3.25

We all take too many drugs. Not just cigarettes and alcohol, or even marijuana. We know about them, and we know just how much of each is good or bad - even if we don't choose to act on the knowledge. The stuff that's really insidious is what we get on prescription at the chemist (or, increasingly, off prescription at the supermarket).

You name it, and there's a pill for it. Relief for mind and body is never more than a swallow away.

Talk to doctors, especially GPs, and many of them will admit to prescribing more drugs than their patients really need. Just one more symptom of what has become the prevailing view of medicine: the view that the human body is a machine in need of technological tinkering when it doesn't perform efficiently.

If this notion is fostered by the drug companies who deluge doctors with advertisements, handouts and visits from pharmaceutical reps, furthermore patients naturally like to get something tangible out of their visit to the surgery.

So despite the ineffectiveness of, say, antibiotics in dealing with the upper respiratory infections caused by viruses, antibiotics continue to be prescribed in such cases ... because the patients expect them. Even the act of handing the prescription to the patient has its use: it acts as a neat signal that the consultation is over. A busy doctor who tries to get through his surgery without writing a single unnecessary prescription will probably find his working hours noticeably extended.

One escape from this absurd situation is clearly for the patients to have a better idea of what drugs can and *cannot* do. *How Drugs Work* thus sounds like a useful contribution. And indeed it will be if anyone has the profound determination necessary to read and absorb the information it contains. But apart from would-be pharmacologists, it really is difficult to envisage anyone doing just that.

The sad thing is that the book's authors, Drs Fisher and Christie, are by no means unaware of the problems which our "pill culture" poses. "Like television, the movies, and football," they say, "pills provide yet one more huge polythene sheet separating western man from his environment. For all their medical value ... they hasten the emergence of new diseases, occasionally damage the unborn and litter the human landscape with many more legal addicts than the illegal breed. Above all they are substitutes for reality. Health is a product to be bought and sold, not a human condition to be lived and felt."

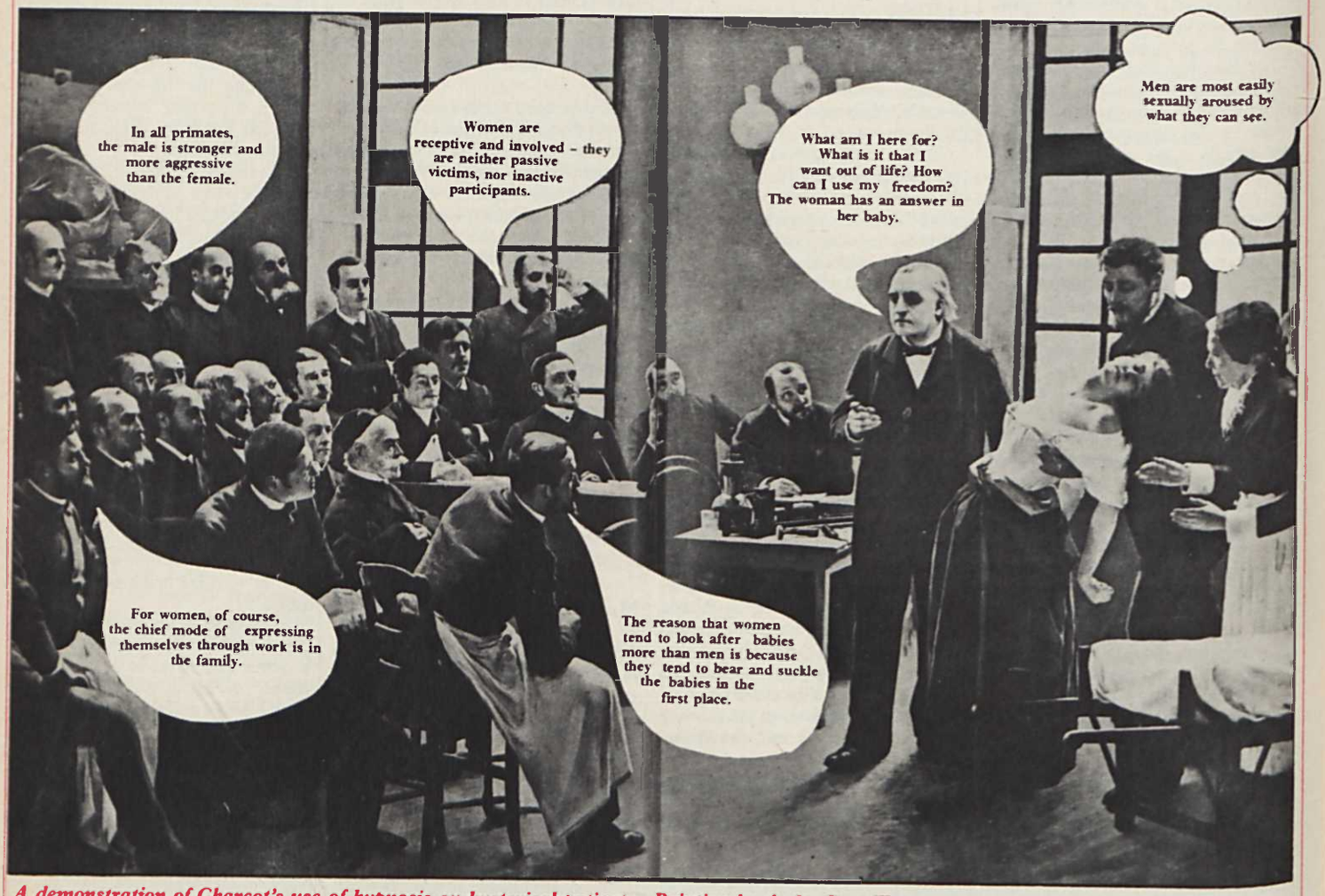
The readably rhetorical style of that passage is no guide to the rest of the book. Some chapters (those on cancer and the psychoactive drugs, for example) are better than others. But all eventually degenerate into the same mass of unnecessary detail. The authors believe their book may be of use to students - and doubtless it will. But their first declared intention was to reach the "educated layman". As they admit, the whole "educated layman" notion is something of a myth - and within their own terms of reference, they seem to have proved that point beyond doubt.

Fisher and Christie really do seem to have missed a great opportunity. If they bring out a revised version - half as long at most and stripped of superfluous detail - they'll be on to a winner.

And we'll all be very grateful.

Geoff Watts

"Some people are boring and some are nasty and whatever relationships they enter into will share these characteristics."
The Female Woman by Arianna Stassinopoulos



A demonstration of Charcot's use of hypnosis on hysterical patients. Painting by Andre Brouillet. The Female Woman has put words into these men's mouths.

This book is interesting because it is one of the first serious attempts made by a woman to trample on the womens movement. But for its internal logic the book depends on the wildest imaginable caricature of the womens movement and a supposedly sensitive differentiation between female and feminine . . . which taken together provide Arianna with the opportunity to spend a few hours with Roget's Thesaurus on the distinction between liberation and emancipation. In her advocacy of the female woman Arianna would have us believe that she is working towards a genuinely creative alternative to the ideas of womens liberation, but like all astute conservatives she knows how to mystify and confuse, what she is really talking about is our old friend femininity but this time laced with 'independence . . . self-realisation . . . and intelligence.'

I'd like to start by looking at what she obviously feels about movements as a whole. At the beginning of the book she says that in coming from a 'patriarchal, baby-crazy' country like Greece, 'I was the obvious, enthusiastic recipient of the womens lib message'. Now what she is doing is seeing the womens movement as a sort of observable external with an implicitly religious message, rather than as a momentum which women are involved in creating through exploring the contradictions in our own lives and working collectively to understand and change our situation. There is no static concept or practice of liberation for which we would like Arianna to sign on the dotted line. At a meeting at LSE recently Arianna is reported as having said 'You can't have a movement without leaders': it's true that no movement can grow without political coherence and strategic priorities but this is quite different from the kind of megalomania Arianna assumes operates within womens liberation. She talks about Kate Millett as 'high priestess', again the evangelism that she has attributed to the movement. What the womens movement is trying to *avoid* is precisely the sort of internal authoritarianism that has characterised other political movements: the small group structure which makes possible the participation of all its members is central to our practice.

Apart from being 'muddled intellectuals projecting their hang-ups on to all women' we are at the same time 'liberated trendies' ruled by Kate Millett and Germaine Greer who refuse to let us speak at meetings. But a recent issue of Spare Rib contained an article about the womens movement in America in which Kate Millett emphasised that joining a gay consciousness-raising group a while after her book was published 'saved me. I came back to the movement as a grass-roots member, not a star. I try to stay very close to the womens movement because it's my life blood and my reality'. And in her review of Arianna's book in The Listener Germaine Greer pointed out very openly that she isn't active in womens liberation and that the Female Eunuch did not come out of or express the ideas or practice of the organised movement. The reality is thus a little different.

There are whole other areas where Arianna has misrepresented both the structure of the movement and the analyses of women's oppression we have made. In saying that womens liberation regards women as a 'deprived minority group' in order for women to 'gain all the rhetorical power which accrues to the underdog by being thought of as a minority', Arianna is looking at political movements in wholly quantitative ways. Even for a moment accepting Arianna's mechanistic terms of reference her statement is false. Sheila Rowbotham puts it this way: 'Of course womens liberation is diversionary. It is one of the largest diversions that could ever possibly be made – the diversion of one half of the human race towards social revolution'. Little evidence of a minority group here. For the fact that women constitute perhaps 51% of the UK population while blacks may constitute 10% of the US population doesn't mean that you cannot locate analogies in social situations such as the intellectual inferiority which is commonly ascribed to both.

Arianna presents to the world a womens movement which is internally cohesive, a mistake precisely because an ideologically diffuse, anti-authoritarian movement which has not formulated a detailed tactical programme cannot have a definable homogeneity. The important point here is that even if some of her description were accurate, it would reflect the aspirations of some sections of the movement only. Thus for example when she claims that womens liberation says women are oppressed by men, who form a highly privileged group, she is inaccurate because there is debate within the movement about the origins of women's oppression. For a start the fact that women are oppressed doesn't necessarily mean that men are our oppressors, and in saying that I know that radical feminists wouldn't agree with me. Yes there are women in the movement who are exploring practically the possibility of living without contact with men and hence the possibility of reproduction without sexual intercourse, but in conforming to the stereotype of womens liberation that the media has constructed Arianna is



Members of the National Federation of Women Workers demonstrating in 1908
The Female Woman: "Men's abilities are better geared than women's to running an industrial society based primarily on manufacturing."



Marlon Brando with Stephanie Beacham in The Nightcomers.
The Female Woman: "Men are also more single-minded in their pursuit of a sexual partner and expend more energy in 'search' and 'capture'."

extending and perpetuating confusion and distortion. For all that has happened in the imagery of the bourgeois media is that the bra-burning definition of two years ago has metamorphosed into the test-tube babies horror scare of 1973. This caricature has spun off with its own momentum totally separately from the living discussion of sexuality and oppression within the movement.

So Arianna tells us that all Libbers are anti men. Then she tells us that Libbers are anti women: 'If you are an average female reader of this book, you are seen by the leaders of womens lib as perverse, servile, dishonest, inefficient, inconsistent, idiotic, passive, ignorant and ineffectual.' She reiterates this idea when she describes 'the favourite sport of womens lib' as 'the denigration of women as they are today'. In denigrating women's *role* today we denigrate that role in ourselves too, we learn painfully to shed our old ways, ways learnt since childhood, comfortable securities which we try to reject. We do not denigrate women as women.

And there are parts of the book where Arianna is very simply wrong. These are factual points: 'It is not a movement calling for equal opportunities, equal pay, equal status for women's role in life, in fact as well as law'. In 1970 the womens movement agreed on four basic demands which would serve as a unifying force for the movement: equal pay, equal educational opportunities, contraception and abortion on demand and 24-hour nurseries. The much more contentious area here though is what we mean by women's role in life. Arianna's concept of women's role is in fact what she herself has called in other parts of the book a 'purely traditional' one: child care and wifehood. For when she talks about women and work, Arianna describes the Libbers as being 'so intoxicated with their own vehemence against the role of women as wife and mother than they endow *any* job outside the family with the qualities of non-stop fascination that very few jobs do, in fact, possess.' When womens liberation talks about work outside the home we see it in terms of economic independence as being one of the *preconditions* for our emancipation. Since the development of industrial capitalism and the separation of work from home, women have lost most of the economically productive functions they held before the 18th century industrial revolution: women and men were equally involved economically when production was organised within farming communities and manufacturing in the home. This in itself shows how Arianna has misconstrued history when she defines women's traditional role as strictly reproductive.

But in terms of women's situation now, we do not think, like Arianna, that liberation means 'compelling women into male roles by devaluing female ones', we do not fetishise paid work for its own sake. To see paid work as the whole of life would be to identify people's aspirations with capitalism's needs. Yes capitalism does require a disciplined labour force and capitalism does evaluate individuals at the monetary level, but the womens movement, while advocating economic autonomy for women now, is at the same time fighting a whole social system with its stereotyping and compartmentalising of sex roles. We are fighting the language of society as well as its structure.

Since Arianna's hostility to the womens movement is derived from her thesis that womens liberation has rejected all the evidence for sex differences between men and women, I think it's important first to look at the way she explores the world herself because her ahistorical view of society largely determines the nature of her argument on innate sex differences. Arianna at no point makes clear that the particular society she is talking about is one of the advanced capitalist states of Western Europe in the middle of the 20th century. Thus she has no sensitivity to historical relativism. She talks about 'complex' societies, 'changed economic and social conditions', without at any stage specifying what she means by complexity or change. And when she talks about women's traditional role she completely ignores class as a historical determinant of that role: thus Catherine Hall, in her paper on the history of the housewife for the Ruskin College History Workshop earlier this year, showed that the need for female labour in the village communities of the 14th century gave these women a certain social strength because they could hold land, while aristocratic women, with no economic or judicial rights and minimal rights over their own property, were circumscribed by their role as marriageable commodities. Clearly Arianna's linguistic and historical vagueness helps her to make her argument on sex differences appear more plausible: since she has given her thesis no historical location or perspective she can make 'eternal' sex differences appear always responsible for the division of labour and role differentiation.

Arianna maintains that the womens movement retreats doggedly from any discussion of biological difference between men and women. If Arianna had had any contact with the movement she would find out that there are groups like the womens studies course in Cambridge, which are exploring this whole area. The point is that to be dogmatic in either direction is to confuse the issue. Her argument is that 'men and women differ in every cell of their bodies, and body and mind are not separate entities in the simple and rigid way the womens libbers believe.' In asserting a strict genetic and hormonal basis for characteristics such as aggression in males, expressiveness in females, she has taken her main data from two ▶

areas, intersexed individuals and experiments on animals.

One general point about this whole subject is that the experimental evaluation of innate sex differences, such as differing response to visual/verbal stimuli in infants, should not be assumed to correlate automatically with observed difference in adult interests. What Arianna does is to posit a causal and eternal relation between, for example, physical/sexual aggression in men and social power/superiority: 'Some degree of male dominance is necessary in sexual relationships but society is very careful to control and limit it It is those who uphold tradition 'Patriarchal' standards who wish to restrain the male potential for promiscuity, violence and exploitation.' As well as this, all the literature on intersexed situations is very confused, you can find cases to argue any way that you want, but it seems that almost any amount of biological difference *can* be overridden by cultural factors. And Arianna is moving into the Dirty Tricks department when she argues from numerically tiny phenomena, like intersexing and extra X or Y chromosome, to the general in society. It's interesting that she ignores her own deviousness in this area while castigating Kate Millett for quoting extensively from the sexual literature of Henry Miller and Norman Mailer thus: 'It is absurd to infer from these extreme cases of male sexual dominance that all male sexuality is so repulsively brutal'.

The second point here is that it's a mistake to argue from animals to humans in a situation where most of the work on hormones and aggression has been done on animals, and where the few experiments on humans dealing with hormones and sexuality have had very inconsistent results. As well as this the experiments have neglected all other factors such as psychological anxiety and previous sexual experience. Arianna's rigid extrapolations from biology to social behaviour reflect the inadequacy of existing experimental methodology: you cannot make one-to-one correlations precisely because in humans you cannot isolate individual variables from the whole social and personal situation.

Arianna's discussion of women's existing role is derived from a myriad collection of innate sex differences which correlate with 'distinctively female qualities' such as skill in inter-personal relationships based on female verbal superiority and an emerging economic importance based on female 'expressive' qualities given the structural shift in the economy from manufacturing to service. So she leaves us with a sociology which is quite consistently biologically determinist. Thus pornography will continue as a male interest because 14 week old boys have been observed experimentally to respond more strongly than 14 week old girls to visual stimuli. Prostituion will remain a female profession because a woman can still 'agree to sleep with a man even if she finds him unattractive. A male prostitute . . . may be unable to perform if he finds her repellent.' Perhaps this is true physiologically, but in this case Arianna is arguing after the event: we know very little about the social significance of male prostitution. And if you apply her analysis of prostitution to female sexuality as a whole, you ignore the interaction between psychology, desire, and the patterns of submission/dominance in relationship which can shape or distort women's sexual response. Arianna's attempts to explain cause and effect through mammalian zoology ignore history, ignore psychology, ignore anthropology, provide no perspective of change. Arianna could at least have suggested that any woman who has rejected her female role is merely an unhappy victim of genetic and hormonal mutation.

Ann Scott

I would like to thank Rose Ades, Delia Dumaresq, Margaret Edney, Jean Gardiner, Tricia Langton, Margaret Millman and Jo Ryan for helping me with this article.



A gathering of Africans in Freedom Square, Johannesburg, in 1951, demonstrates against the government's segregation measures.

A Modest History of the Pin-Up
Mark Gabor
Pan £1.95

This is a very puzzling book. The blurb about Mark Gabor states quite plainly that the book was inspired by his participation in a Men's Liberation group "growing out of empathy with the precepts and philosophy of Women's Liberation". So why has he produced what is without doubt an anthology of pictorial sexism?

True, he has a critical introduction by a women's liberationist. ("The packaging of rape: a feminist indictment", by Joan Nicholson.) True, also, his own introduction examines some of the possible harmful effects of pin-ups. But these disclaimers tell us nothing about why he has written the book. And the body of the text is treated uncritically, at least from the point of view of sexual politics. In fact, it's definitely collusive - both by virtue of the sheer mass of illustration, and by virtue of Gabor's own commentary, which frequently drops its academic stance to employ phrases like "This sultry, nymphlike model . . ."

I suppose Gabor could argue (though he doesn't bother to do so) that an analytical approach to the subject can itself be demystifying: that a comparison of changing tastes in female beauty, including an exposure of the tricks that publishers get up to to arouse their readers, can by itself create in people a critical distance towards the subject. But in an area as sensitive and highly-charged as sexuality, an analytical approach is unlikely to be very useful unless it also attempts to deal with the psychology of sexual responses, and this Gabor has noticeably failed to do.

I would have thought it followed automatically from a Men's Liberationist position that a writer on a subject like this would declare his interest. If Gabor likes pin-ups and finds he responds to them, why doesn't he say so? If he feels a tension between his liking for pin-ups and his disapproval of sexism, why doesn't he explore it? This is, after all, one of the problems that peo[illegible] Men's Groups would like to understand better: how do you sort out a positive aesthetic/sexual response to female beauty from reduction of women to sex-objects? How can male erotic fantasy be rid of its exploitative and sexist aspects - or, to put it another way, how can male erotic fantasy become enriched so that it no longer focuses so exclusively on the physical? A book on pin-ups which explored these themes would be extremely useful, but Gabor ignores them. So we end up with the curious situation of a man who is publically committed to struggling against sexism making a very large amount of money (the book will undoubtedly sell extremely well) out of a collection of several hundred sexist pictures.

Gabor's introduction distinguishes between pin-ups (in which the prime quality is sexual allure inciting fantasy about personal involvement with the subject) from other representations of the female body, whether artistic, candid or pornographic. (The latter makes explicit what pin-ups leave to be imagined.) He traces the history of the pin-up, noting the gradual change from coyness, humour and "cheesecake" to unabashed eroticism (or "mere flesh", as Joan Nicholson calls it). Pin-ups, like any other cultural form, are stratified by class - idealised, "tasteful" nudes for the rich (from the Gibson girl to the Playmate of the Month), and crude, vulgarised nudes for the masses.

Finally, stating that "everyone has and must deal with, erotic fantasies", Gabor attempts to decide whether pin-ups are a "good thing", irrespective of their sexism, which he admits. He notes that men seek in pin-ups what they do not have in real life; that pin-ups provide fantasy-substitutes for wives, mothers, real women; that men can dominate (in fantasy, at least) their pin-ups, because unlike real women pin-ups don't answer back - rather than encouraging them to understand their true sexual and emotional nature. He is emphatic, that the idealisation and vulgarisation of women in pin-ups are twin-poles of the same phenomenon, and are equally offensive to anti-sexist politics. Gabor concludes on an optimistic note. While pin-ups are more widely

The First Sex
Elizabeth Gould Davis
£2.95
DENT



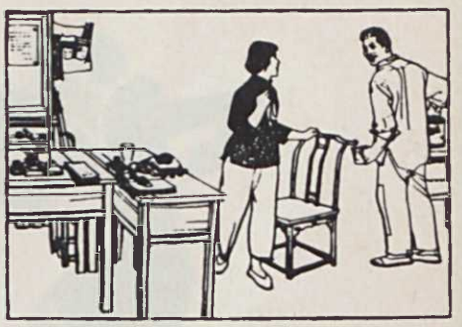
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78. Xiwang pleaded with her, "Mother of Xiao Ju, I'm involved in this. Even if they took more work points than they should have, I was the work-point recorder. I wasn't going to record the extra points but they began to kick up a fuss and I got all confused."



79. Shuangshuang was so angry that she began to tremble all over. "If you hadn't been involved in this, I would have exposed it in a big-character wall poster, but since it does involve you, I'll go to the commune to accuse you." So saying, she threw down her pen and like a gust of wind rushed out of the house.



80. She reached the commune office in no time and reported the whole thing to Secretary Liu. He said with a smile, "This includes Xiwang. Isn't he your husband?"



81. Shuangshuang explained, "My husband has no sense of right or wrong and he has no definite principles and he's easily swayed. But Sun You is not like that; he's full of bad ideas. He's not a member of the proletariat. Our family is."



82. Secretary Liu now understood everything. He asked Shuangshuang what she thought was the best way to guarantee quality. Shuangshuang did not know. He said, "For example, we should strengthen political education as well as making sure that assignments are properly fulfilled. What do you think of that?" Shuangshuang nodded in full agreement.



83. Secretary Liu also asked Shuangshuang whether she was a woman cadre. She shook her head. "No, people said my tongue was too sharp." Secretary Liu smiled and said, "If you are impartial and genuinely responsible, your tongue should be sharp. But at the same time, if something comes up we should consult with the masses."



84. The next day, the Party branch secretary called a meeting of all the team members near the field of wheat stubble. Sun You, Jin Qiao, and Xiwang all made a self-criticism and the secretary said, "Let's consider the matter now closed. In the future we should put into operation the system of group responsibility."



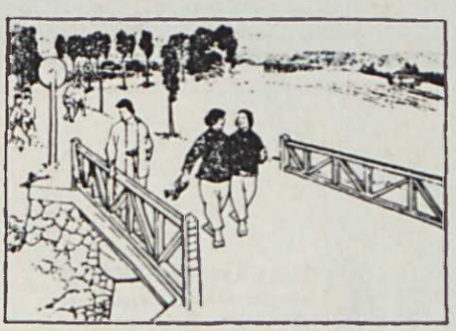
85. The Party secretary continued, "Today our team has to elect a women's team leader. The Party branch opinion is to let Li Shuangshuang try it. What does everyone think of that?" No sooner had he finished than everybody at the meeting raised their hands and shouted, "Agreed! Agreed!"



86. Everybody wanted Shuangshuang to say what she thought, but she only smiled to herself and refused. The branch secretary said, "In that case, I'll say something. Since we elected Shuangshuang, from now on we must listen to her instructions and that applies especially to us men laborers."



87. The Party branch secretary faced Shuangshuang and said, "As for you, Shuangshuang, you must also take great care." Xiwang glanced quickly at Shuangshuang and she pouted her lips at him and everybody exploded into laughter.



88. After the meeting had broken up, Xiwang followed behind Shuangshuang, embarrassed and silent.



89. On the way, Shuangshuang suddenly discovered a pig eating the maize. She picked up a stone and cried out, "Shoo!" and ran off to chase the pig away. Xiwang, startled, raised his head and saw Jin Qiao walking along the path alone, his head lowered.

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More next month.



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